

Genesis

Title:

In the original Hebrew manuscripts of the Old Testament there were no names or titles to the various books. The Jews, to whom God gave His Word, usually called each book by the first one or two words of the opening sentence. In Genesis the first word in Hebrew, the original language of the Old Testament, was the word translated “In the beginning”, and so that is what the Jews called it. Many centuries later Jewish scholars translated the Old Testament into the Greek language and gave names to each of the books. This translation is called the Septuagint. Much later these names were used in the Latin translation of the Bible, and many centuries after that in the English translation of the Bible. In this way the names came into what is now called the King James Version and other English versions.

Author:

The people of Israel from the time of Moses onward were sure that Moses wrote the first five books of the Bible, and there is strong evidence in the Bible itself to support this belief. See Ex 17:14; 24:4; 34:27; Num 33:2; Deut 31:19,24-26; Josh 1:8; 8:31; 1 Kings 2:3; Luke 24:44; 1 Cor 9:9. Most importantly, Jesus Christ Himself said that Moses wrote about Him. See Matt 19:8; John 5:46-47; 7:19.

Date:

Probably sometime between 1446 and 1406 before Christ.

Theme:

Beginnings. Here we have the beginning of God’s written revelation of Himself, the beginning of the world, of mankind, of sin, of God’s plan of redemption, of the various races of men, and the beginning of the people of Israel through whom God gave His Word.

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1 In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. ²And the earth was desolate and void; and darkness was upon the surface of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the surface of the waters.

³And God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light. ⁴And God saw the light,

that it was good, and God divided the light from the darkness. ⁵And God called the light day, and the darkness he called night. And the evening and the morning were the first day.

⁶And God said, "Let there be an expanse between the waters, and let it separate the

1:1 "*Beginning*" – Ps 33:6,9; 102:25; Isa 42:5; 45:18; John 1:2-3; 1:16; Heb 1:2; Rev 4:11. We do not know for certain whether this refers to the beginning of the whole universe, or only the beginning of God's plan for the earth. And we do not know when this beginning took place. Some seem sure that it was some billions of years ago. Others think that it was only some thousands of years ago. See the additional note on all this at the end of Genesis.

Here the time of beginning is not the important thing, but the fact of it. Nothing in creation is eternal, only God is (Ps 90:2). Before creation there was God, and God made the world out of nothing by His Word and almighty power.

The great Creator appears in the first verse of the Bible and He is referred to some 30 times in this first chapter alone. The whole Bible is His narrative. It gives us some of His mighty acts and wonderful words. Especially it gives us the story of His dealings with mankind, and what He has done to teach them the truth about Himself. He teaches us also how we can come to Him, and how to worship Him.

The Bible does not begin with proofs of God's existence. It simply presents Him in action. His works speak of His existence and we learn something of what He is like by the things He has made. See Ps 19:1-2; Isa 40:25-26; Rom 1:20.

"*Heaven*" – this could also be translated "heavens" or "sky" or "skies". It does not necessarily indicate outer space, though it may possibly do so.

1:2 "*Earth*" – this could also be translated "land" – the Hebrew word means both "earth" and "land", and throughout the Old Testament the land of Israel is indicated by this word (*eretz*). Some scholars believe that here in Genesis the verses describing God's creation from verse 2 onwards refer only to the land later promised to the children of Israel. The usual view is that this chapter deals with God's work in the whole earth.

"*Was*" – not "became". This indicates a prevailing condition, not a change in the condition (this makes the "gap" theory – the theory that there was a long period of time between verses one and two – seem very unlikely).

"*Desolate and void*" – Ps 104:30; Jer 4:23. "Desolate" is an accurate translation of the Hebrew word here. There cannot be an object completely without form. In the beginning the earth was void of life and not yet ready for human

habitation. There was only a spherical shape covered with water and darkness. But God did not create the earth to remain in that condition, but eventually to become the habitation of mankind – Isa 45:18.

"*Darkness*" – see how God Himself describes this in Job 38:9.

"*Deep*" – it seems that the whole earth was covered with ocean. Dry land did not appear until later – verse 9.

"*Spirit of God moved*" – this suggests that God's Spirit was present to prepare the earth for man's habitation. Compare Ps 104:30. God's Spirit is seen at work throughout the Bible. Here are some of the verses which refer to Him: 6:3; 41:38; Ex 31:3; Num 24:2; 1 Sam 16:13; 2 Sam 23:2; Ps 51:11; 143:10; Isa 11:2; 61:1; Matt 1:18; 3:16; 12:28; Luke 11:13; John 3:5-6; 14:17; 15:26; 16:7-15; Acts 2:4; Rom 8:9; 1 Cor 2:10; 6:19; Gal 3:2; Eph 1:13; 2:22; 2 Pet 1:19; Rev 22:17. See notes at John 14:16-17.

1:3 "*And God said*" – we are not told when God spoke the words that follow. Some scholars believe that there was a long gap between verses 2 and 3, and that the earth remained for a long time in darkness. See the note at the end of Genesis. It is not necessary to believe that the original work of creation revealed in verse 1 must be included in the work of the "first day". Verse 1 gives us the original creation. Verse 3 begins the revelation of what God did after that to prepare the earth for life and human habitation. We are not told when God sent light to the dark earth. Only the bare fact is stated.

"*Said*" – by the mere power of His word God created – vs 6,9,11,14,20,24; Ps 33:6-9; Heb 11:3.

"*Light*" – 2 Cor 4:6. The context points to light on earth, which had been lying in darkness. We are not told what the source of this light was. Compare v 14.

1:4 Isa 45:7.

1:5 Ps 74:16.

"*Evening...morning were the first day*" – if the light in v 3 did not come from the sun, then this evening and morning could possibly have a very different meaning from what those words mean now, but see the note below on vs 14-18.

"*Day*" – see notes on 2:4; 5:2.

1:6 Ps 104:1-2; Jer 10:12.

"*Expanse*" – to the present-day reader this word better expresses the meaning of the Hebrew than the word "firmament" in the KJV.

waters from the waters". ⁷And God made the expanse, and separated the waters which were under the expanse from the waters which were above the expanse. And it was so. ⁸And God called the expanse "heaven". And the evening and the morning were the second day.

⁹And God said, "Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together to one place, and let the dry land appear". And it was so. ¹⁰And God called the dry *land* earth, and the gathering together of the waters he called seas. And God saw that *it was good*.

¹¹And God said, "Let the earth bring forth vegetation, the plant bearing seed and the fruit tree on the earth bearing fruit according to its kind, with its seed in it". And it was so. ¹²And the earth brought forth vegetation, the plant bearing seed according to its kind, and the tree bearing fruit, with its seed in it, according to its kind. And God saw that *it was good*. ¹³And the evening and the morning were the third day.

¹⁴And God said, "Let there be lights in the expanse of the heaven to separate the day from the night, and let them be for signs,

and for seasons, and for days, and years, ¹⁵and let them be for lights in the expanse of the heaven to give light upon the earth". And it was so. ¹⁶And God made two great lights: the greater light to govern the day, and the lesser light to govern the night. *He made* the stars also. ¹⁷And God set them in the expanse of the heaven to give light upon the earth, ¹⁸and to govern the day and the night, and to separate the light from the darkness. And God saw that *it was good*. ¹⁹And the evening and the morning were the fourth day.

²⁰And God said, "Let the waters teem with living, moving creatures, and let birds fly above the earth in the open expanse of heaven". ²¹And God created great sea monsters, and every living moving creature, according to its kind, with which the waters teem, and every winged bird according to its kind. And God saw that *it was good*. ²²And God blessed them, saying, "Be fruitful, and increase in number, and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds increase *in number* on the earth". ²³And the evening and the morning were the fifth day.

1:7 Ps 148:4.

"*Made*"—the Hebrew word also means "brought forth", "prepared", "made ready", etc. See verse 16.

1:8 "*Heaven*"—the Hebrew word could also be translated "sky" or "skies" or even "air". This "expanse" is where the birds fly (verse 20), so it refers to something close to the earth.

1:9 Job 38:8-11; Ps 95:5.

1:10 Ps 33:7.

1:11-13 Ps 104:14. Vegetation came before animal life.

1:14-18 Ps 74:16; Ps 136:7-9; Isa 40:26. There are other sources of light than the sun, and the light in v 3 may have been from another source (clouds of ionized gas is one possibility). Or it might have been, as some think, that the earth was at first obscured by dense clouds of vapor. Some light from the sun was able to penetrate to the earth, but the sun itself could not have been seen. Here perhaps the meaning is that for the first time the sun and moon were made visible from the earth's point of view. Or it may possibly mean that God put them in their present positions, or that He did something to them that resulted in their present condition. There is, perhaps, another possibility – see note at the end of Genesis.

In v 16 the word "created" is not used (as it is in v 1 – in Hebrew "bara"). The Hebrew word here ("asah") has various meanings, such as "to work on", "to produce", "to make", "to prepare" (see Ps 74:16), or even "to appoint".

Observe that the sun and moon were given as signs to mark seasons and to govern day and night. They were not made that men might worship them (see Deut 4:19; 17:3-5; Ezek 8:16-18). We are to worship the Creator who made them, Him only (Ex 20:3; Matt 4:10). The sun and moon have no spiritual influence at all in the affairs of men. They do not govern men. They govern day and night by physically affecting activities on earth by their presence or absence. Seeing the sun, moon and stars we should realize something of God's greatness, of how superior He is to man and to all other things He has made (Ps 8:3-4; 102:25-27; Isa 40:12-17,25,26; 44:24).

1:16 "*He made the stars also*"—perhaps this means that He made them appear from earth's point of view. But see the note at the end of Genesis.

1:17 "*Set them*" (v 17) – or "appointed them".

1:19-25 Animal life was first created in the water, then on land.

1:24-26 There is a theory devised by men that tries to explain the development of life on earth from lifeless matter to man, leaving God out altogether. This theory is atheistic evolution. It is an unproved theory and there are still many unsolved scientific problems in connection with it – not to mention other kinds of problems.

For example, how did life originally arise spontaneously out of lifeless matter? How did lifeless matter itself originate? How can consciousness and intelligence, mind and

²⁴And God said, "Let the earth bring forth the living creature according to its kind, cattle, and creeping thing, and beast of the earth according to its kind". And it was so. ²⁵And God made the beast of the earth according to its kind, and cattle according to their kind, and everything that creeps on the earth according to its kind. And God saw that *it was good*.

²⁶And God said, "Let us make man in our image, according to our likeness, and let

personality, morality and ethics, religion and spirituality be explained if the development of man began originally from lifeless matter alone which have none of these? The teaching that these came about without God, from inanimate matter, is a mere theory, not scientific fact; and it is a theory greatly lacking in real evidence. And it is neither wise nor scientific to believe something without proper evidence. The Bible declares that atheism, that all denial of God, comes from a heart that is foolish and perverse (see Ps 14:1 and note).

Others, who believe in God, have thought that God used the process of evolution to bring all present forms of life into existence. From the evidence we have in the Bible, and the knowledge of the many defects in the theory of evolution, we can say that this seems very unlikely.

Let us always remember that any theory or hypothesis is based on partial knowledge. It is an attempt to explain matters without having all the facts. Often when more is known, theories must be either greatly modified or completely abandoned. This has happened again and again in the history of scientific investigation. As for us, let us be very careful in our statements so that we do not either oppose a teaching of the Bible, or unnecessarily add to what it says, or show that we are ignoring real evidence of any kind, scientific or otherwise.

1:26 The language of this verse reveals, man is not a product of evolution, but a new creation, different from all that was created before. According to the Bible man is not a mere animal. And he is not God or a part of God. He is far above the animals. No one should think of calling animals the children of God. And the Bible does not say that animals were made in God's image. But man, though far above animals, is far below God. He is a creature, God is the Creator. However, in certain ways he resembles God. He was made with personality. This indicates a very important truth – man's Creator also has personality. God is not an impersonal power.

Man was given a mind to think about God's revelation, a will to choose between good and evil, an ability to love and worship

them rule over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth". ²⁷So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him. He created them male and female.

²⁸And God blessed them and God said to them, "Be fruitful, and increase in number, and fill the earth, and subdue it, and rule over the fish of the sea, and over the birds

God. He was made in God's image (Gen 5:1; 9:6; 1 Cor 11:7; Eph 4:24). This does not mean that God has a body like man's. God is Spirit. See John 4:24.

Notice in this verse the words "us" and "our". See also Gen 3:22. It seems that here is a hint of the mysterious and wonderful doctrine of the Trinity, which is gradually revealed in the Bible. To whom was God speaking in this verse? To angels? The Bible nowhere says that man was made in the image of angels or that angels joined with God in His work of making man. Then to whom was God speaking? To some gods or other? There is only one God and not many. This is a truth stated everywhere in the Bible – Deut 4:35,39; Isa 43:10-12; 44:6-8; Rom 3:29-30; 1 Cor 8:4; 1 Tim 1:17; 6:15-16; Jude 25. So God was not speaking to another God or god.

But according to the Bible, in the one Godhead there are three persons, named the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit – one God, three persons perfectly united with one will, one mind, one nature. All three were active in creation. The Father appears in v 1, the Spirit in v 2, and the Son was with the Father in the whole process of creation (John 1:1-3; Col 1:16-17; Heb 1:10-12). See notes on the Trinity at Matt 3:16. Here in Genesis in this verse it seems that God the Father is speaking to the other members of the Trinity. **1:27** Matt 19:4-6.

"So" – in the KJV every verse in this chapter except this one and verse 1 begins with the word "and". In Hebrew there is no separate word for this, but one single letter joined with the word that follows. Apparently in Hebrew this was a device that aided the flow of the language and often added nothing to the meaning of the sentence containing it. The KJV sometimes translates this by other English words. In this verse the same Hebrew letter is translated "so". In other places in the Old Testament it is translated in the KJV as "thus" (Gen 2:1), "but" (Gen 2:6,17), "now" (Gen 3:1), "so" (Gen 3:2), etc, and sometimes it is omitted altogether (Gen 8:2).

1:28 Ps 8:6-8; Jer 27:5. Notes on "bless" and "blessed" at 12:1-3; Num 6:22-27; Deut 28:1; Ps 1:1; Matt 5:3-12.

of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth”.

²⁹And God said, “Look, I have given you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth, and every tree on which is the fruit of a seed-bearing tree. It will be food for you. ³⁰And to every beast of the earth, and to every bird of the air, and to everything that creeps on the earth that has life, I have given every green plant for food”. And it was so.

1:29-30 God gave new directions after the great flood described in chapters 7 and 8. See 9:3-4.

1:29 “Look”– or “behold” (KJV). “Behold” was in common use when the KJV was translated (early 17th century), but is rarely used now, except in the phrase “lo and behold”. In Hebrew (and in Greek) the word here translated “look” is very often used merely to call attention to the words which follow. It is sometimes difficult to translate meaningfully into good English. Occasionally we have put it in the past tense, as in verse 31 (“saw”).

1:31 Everything God made, including man, was very good. Man was sinless and able to have fellowship with God, and love Him and worship Him in spirit and in truth.

Note on creation and science

Is there any conflict between the account of creation in this chapter and the truths discovered by modern science? No. This first chapter of Genesis, as all the rest of the Bible, is a revelation from God Himself and so is absolutely true to the facts (see 2 Tim 3:16; 2 Pet 1:21). Scientific evidence is not lacking that the order of creation given here is correct—the heavens, and a desolate, empty earth, then light reaching earth, after that vegetation and animal life in water, and later on land, and finally man. Science is in agreement with this chapter that creation is real. It is not a mere dream in the mind of God.

However, this chapter is at odds with certain speculations and theories of science that some put forth to try to explain the origin of the universe apart from God. But the speculations and theories of science are not the facts of science, and we should not confuse these things. It is not scientific to say that the universe originated by itself out of nothing. No scientist was there to observe what happened then, and there is no evidence now that such things ever happen. When it comes to the origin of the universe scientists can only speculate, just as those who are not scientists. Or else they can believe the record God has given here in His Word.

Concerning the origin of things, Genesis chapter one gives the most logical and sensible and reasonable explanation in existence. It certainly has not been disproved by science, and many fine and brilliant scientists have believed this account and accepted it as God’s revelation.

³¹And God looked at everything that he had made, and saw that it was very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day.

2 Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. ²And on the seventh day God completed his work which he had done; and he ceased on the seventh day from all his work which he had

And regarding the theories of some scientists which are contrary to the plain teachings of the Bible we should keep in mind the following: Scientists who have not believed in God and received the Lord Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour are fallen, sinful people just as the rest of mankind, and this will be revealed in their thoughts and theories as well as in their actions – see 8:21; Ps 14:1-3; Jer 17:9; Matt 15:19; Rom 1:18-23; 3:17-19; Eph 2:1-3. So it is a dangerous and foolish thing to accept a theory of any unbelieving scientist (no matter how skilled and knowledgeable he is in his own field) when what he puts forth relates in any way to God or religion or the Bible or to ethics and morality.

2:1 “Host of them”– this phrase is not defined, but may mean the sun, moon, and stars that appear from earth’s viewpoint. Some think it means the whole universe with its many galaxies, but other explanations have been offered. See the note at the end of Genesis.

2:2 “Ceased”– this could also be translated “rested”, but we should not think that God gets weary (Isa 40:28). He finished His work and so ceased His activities. He here establishes a principle for man to follow – one rest day after six days of work (Ex 20:8-11).

“Day”– 1:5; 5:2. This word is used in at least four different ways in the Bible: daylight hours – 1:5,14; John 11:9; a period of 24 hours – Matt 17:1; Luke 24:21; a longer period of time – Isa 34:8; John 9:4 (compare also 2 Pet 3:8); metaphorically – 1 Thess 5:5,8.

Here in v 3 the seventh day seems to indicate a day as we know it now. It is plain from Ex 20:8-11 that the day God sanctified for man was a day of 24 hours. And so it may be that we should think that the six previous days, the days of creation were also days of 24 hours each.

However, verses 4-6 speak of the “day” that “the LORD God made the earth and the heavens”, and goes on to indicate ground separate from the sea, and the way the ground was watered. So the word “day” there can hardly mean a day of 24 hours, for it includes at least God’s acts in days 2 and 3 of chapter one. It is not always easy to interpret how the word “day” is used in the Bible, and perhaps to be too dogmatic in this matter is to be unwise. Some have argued like

done. ³And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it, because in it he had ceased from all his work which God created and did.

⁴These *are* the accounts of the heavens and of the earth when they were created. In the day that the LORD God made the earth and the heavens, ⁵no plant of the field was yet in the earth, and no shrub of the field had yet sprouted. For the LORD God had not caused it to rain on the earth, and *there was* no man to till the ground. ⁶But a mist went up from the earth and watered the whole face of the ground. ⁷And the LORD God formed man *from* the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul.

⁸And the LORD God planted a garden toward the east in Eden, and there he put the man whom he had formed. ⁹And out of the

this: God ceased His work after the six days of creation, the days were possibly long periods of time, and He sanctified His seventh day. Man's days are a small picture of that and so later on God ordered men to labour six days and rest on the seventh, and sanctified man's seventh day. The reader may decide for himself what to make of this argument. Others have taught that the days of creation were days of 24 hours, but that they refer only to God's activity in the land later promised to Israel, not to the whole earth. **2:3** "*Sanctified*" – this is the first use of this word in the Old Testament. It means to make holy or to declare holy or to set apart. See notes at Lev 20:7; John 17:17.

2:4-6 It is obvious that conditions in the early earth were very different from what they are now.

2:4 "*LORD*" – the word "the" has been added here by the KJV (and everywhere the word LORD appears). LORD (all capital letters) translates the Hebrew word for "Jehovah" (or "Yahweh" – which is how it is sometimes written, being closer to the sound of the Hebrew). This is the first appearance of the most common name for God in the Old Testament, used more than 6000 times (in Hebrew 6519 times). For the meaning of this name see note at Ex 3:14. In the KJV "Lord" (not having all capital letters) is a translation of a different Hebrew word. See the note at 15:2.

2:6 The Hebrew of this verse is very difficult and might be translated in other ways.

2:7 This is the second account of God's creation of man. It does not contradict the first account but gives added information. Man's body is composed of elements found in the earth (Gen 3:19). In the Hebrew language even the word for man (Adam – see v 20) is very close to the word for ground (Adamah). But man is not mere body. See Eccl 12:7; Ps 31:5; Luke 16:22-23; Acts 7:59; 2 Cor 5:6-8; 1 Thess 5:23; Heb 12:22-23;

ground the LORD God caused to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; also the tree of life in the middle of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil.

¹⁰And a river went out of Eden to water the garden, and from there it divided and became four head *streams*. ¹¹The name of the first *is* Pishon. That is the one that goes around the whole land of Havilah, where *there is* gold. ¹²And the gold of that land is good. There *also are* bdellium and the onyx stone. ¹³And the name of the second river *is* Gihon. This *is* the one that goes around the whole land of Cush. ¹⁴And the name of the third river *is* Hiddekel. This *is* the one that goes toward the east of Assyria. And the fourth river *is* Euphrates.

¹⁵And the LORD God took the man and

Rev 6:9-11. In the creation of man's body God used previously existing material. But we cannot say that He used previously existing materials when He brought plant and animal life into existence. He does not tell us either that He did or that He did not.

2:8 To some extent we can identify the location of Eden from the information given in verses 10-14. The Tigris and Euphrates rivers flow through present-day Iraq into the Persian Gulf. Nothing is known about the rivers called here Pishon and Gihon. They may no longer exist. The Cush mentioned in verse 13 is not the land we call Ethiopia today, but another region of the same name located in the neighborhood of Iraq.

2:9 We do not know what the tree of life and the tree of knowledge of good and evil were like. We know only what resulted from eating their fruit. The fruit of one gave life. Eating the fruit of the other gave a specific kind of knowledge. This was not wisdom itself but a knowledge of good and evil that would come from experience. The trees themselves were both good (1:31). God never made anything evil.

2:13 "*Cush*" – in ancient times it appears that there were two regions called by this name. One was in Africa and included a part of present-day Ethiopia, the other was in western Asia.

2:14 "*Hiddekel*" – the river in western Asia now called the Tigris.

2:15-20 The picture here is beautiful – God and man at peace, in fellowship and communication. Man knew God and walked with God. God's plan had man in a garden, surrounded by beauty, in the midst of plenty, with pleasant work to do. And man was created for a very high purpose and destiny. He was the ruler of God's earth (1:28; Ps 8:5-6).

2:15 God did not create man for idleness.

put him into the garden of Eden to cultivate it and to keep it. ¹⁶And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, “You may freely eat of every tree of the garden, ¹⁷but you shall not eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil; for in the day that you eat of it you will surely die”.

¹⁸And the LORD God said, “*It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him*”.

¹⁹And the LORD God formed every beast of the field from the ground, and every bird of the air, and brought *them* to Adam to see what he would call them. And whatever Adam called each living creature, that *became* its name. ²⁰And Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the birds of the air, and to every beast of the field. But as for Adam there was not found a suitable helper for him. ²¹And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall on Adam, and he slept. And he took one of his ribs and in its place closed up the

flesh. ²²And *with* the rib which the LORD God took from man, he made a woman, and brought her to the man.

²³And Adam said, “This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh. She shall be called ‘woman’, because she was taken out of man”.

²⁴Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother, and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh.

²⁵And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.

3 Now the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said to the woman, “Really, did God say, ‘You shall not eat of every tree of the garden?’”

²And the woman said to the serpent, “We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden, ³but of the fruit of the tree which is in the middle of the garden, God said,

2:17 God is the Creator, the Lord of the universe. He has a perfect right to give commands to His creatures, and to test their love and obedience. He gave the first man only one command – that they must not eat the fruit of a certain tree. The command might have been about something else – the meaning would have been the same. The meaning can be expressed in these words: I am God; you are man. It is your privilege and duty to love me supremely, trust me completely and obey me gladly. If you do not do so you shall die.

“*Die*” – the first reference to death in the Bible. It resulted from man’s disobedience and sin as we shall see in chapter 3. Death means separation – the spiritual separation of man from God (Eph 2:1,5) and the physical separation of body and spirit (Eccl 12:7). See also Rom 5:12; 6:23; Jam 1:15.

2:18 This refers to a specific man, Adam. The definite article is used. It is a general principle that a man needs a wife but it does not always apply (Jer 16:1-2; 1 Cor 7:26-27). In the case of the first man it was necessary for him to have a wife if there was to be a human race. But it is not necessary for any specific individual now to marry, because perpetuating the human race is not an issue.

2:19 “*From the ground*” – all animal life did not originate in the water.

“*Lord God... brought*” – God appeared to Adam in some form, probably either angelic or human, to have fellowship and talk with him. John 1:18 says that no man has seen God at any time. This means no man has seen God in His spiritual essence as He is described in 1 Tim 6:16. But He sometimes appeared in human or angelic form

in Old Testament times and He came as Jesus Christ, as described in the New Testament. Note on angels at Gen 16:7.

2:20 Man from the beginning had the gift of language and the ability to use words rightly. God gave him this gift when He created him.

“*Adam*” – this could be translated “man” also. In Hebrew the words are the same.

2:21-22 Woman, too, is not a product of evolution but a unique creation of God (1 Cor 11:8-12).

2:21 “*Took one of his ribs*” – possibly this could be translated “took part of his side”.

2:23-24 From the beginning God ordained marriage as one man, one woman (Mark 10:7-8; Eph 5:28-33).

“*Woman*” – in Hebrew the word for woman sounds very much like one of the words for man (man – “ish” or “eesh”; woman – “isha” or “ishsha”).

2:25 See 3:7,10,11.

3:1 This serpent was unlike present-day snakes. It was the most clever of all animals and apparently, until God’s curse came on it (v 14), did not crawl on its belly as snakes do now. Here it seems clear that Satan, the chief of demons, was using the serpent and speaking through it. In the Bible the serpent is a symbolic name of Satan himself (2 Cor 11:3; Rev 12:9; 20:2). Satan, not literal snakes, tempts people to sin and disobey God (Matt 4:3; 1 Thess 3:5). Note on Satan at 1 Chron 21:1.

“*Really*” – the KJV has “yea”, but this is not a literal translation of the Hebrew word which has a variety of possible meanings – “also”, “though”, “so much the more”, “indeed”, etc.

3:2 See 2:16-17.

3:3 She added to God’s words. See Prov 30:6.

‘You shall not eat of it, nor shall you touch it, lest you die.’ ”

⁴And the serpent said to the woman, “You will not surely die. ⁵For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like gods, knowing good and evil”.

⁶And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make *one* wise, she took of its fruit and ate it, and also gave *some* to her husband with her. And he ate *it*. ⁷And the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked, and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons.

⁸And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the

day, and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden. ⁹And the LORD God called to Adam and said to him, “Where are you?”

¹⁰And he said, “I heard the sound you *made* in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself”.

¹¹And he said, “Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten of the tree, of which I commanded you not to eat?”

¹²And the man said, “The woman whom you gave *to be* with me, she gave me of the tree, and I ate”.

¹³And the LORD God said to the woman, “What is this that you have done?” And the woman said, “The serpent deceived me, and I ate”.

3:4-5 John 8:44; Rev 12:9. Satan contradicted the word God gave in 2:17. Satan tempts men and destroys them by telling them lies about God, about themselves and about reality. He also tempts by putting some illusion of good or greatness before men. He tried to persuade the woman that God was withholding some good they might gain by listening to himself. So we learn the method Satan uses to ruin human beings – he denies God’s Word, tells lies, and promises some pleasure or false good. See v 22 also.

3:5 “God” – the KJV has “gods”. The Hebrew word here (elohim) can mean either God or gods, but “God” is surely a better translation in this place. The word “gods” is used in the Bible to indicate the false gods worshiped by some people in the world, but when the serpent said this to Eve, there were no other people in the world and no gods. So when she heard the word “elohim” she could only think of the one true God. Even if there had been other gods, Eve, before the fall, would not have been tempted to become like them. But the suggestion she could become like God could have been very appealing to her.

3:6 See 1 Tim 2:14; Jam 1:14-15; 1 John 2:16; Rom 5:12-19. This one sin changed the whole character of man, the whole course of the world. See 6:5; 8:21. Sin is disobedience to God’s Word, rebellion against almighty God, a lack of conformity to His principles. It is acting from self according to one’s own desires contrary to God’s word and will. See 1 John 3:4; 5:17; Jam 4:17; Rom 14:23; Prov 24:9. The man was drawn into sin by his wife. Temptations that come through the marriage relationship can be very strong. Adam was not deceived (1 Tim 2:14) but knowingly disobeyed God and followed his wife’s suggestion.

3:7 In 2:17 God said they would die on the day

they ate of that fruit. That day they did not die physically, but they did die spiritually. This appears in the following verses. Also the process of degeneration which results in physical death began that day (see Rom 5:12). Here in v 7 we see the death of innocence. Man’s reaction to his sin and guilt was shame which he tried to cover and hide. The outward act spoke of an inner spiritual experience.

3:8 “LORD God walking” – compare 12:7; 16:7; 18:1-2. Now man tried to hide from God. But God came to seek and save him. The almighty Creator of chapter 1 is here seen as a God of love and mercy (1 John 4:8). The story of God’s gracious pursuit of lost men begins here and continues throughout the Bible. See notes on Ex 25:8. It was not man who sought God then, and people do not do so now (Rom 3:11). It was God Who sought man, and Who seeks him still. Compare Luke 19:10.

3:9 Of course God knew where Adam was and what he had done, but He wanted Adam to speak out and confess his sin.

3:10 Here is the first mention of fear in the Bible. Sin brings fear of discovery and of God’s presence (John 3:20). It is also true that all the many fears which afflict mankind have their origin in man’s first sin.

3:12 Guilty man at once tried to shift the responsibility for his action onto someone else. Actually Adam was trying to blame God for his sin. It is as though he was saying “God, it’s your fault. You gave this woman to me”.

3:13 The woman speaks as her husband did. She means “It’s not my fault. The serpent deceived me. And after all who made the serpent?” Trying to escape responsibility for one’s sins by putting the blame for them on someone else has been man’s way from that day to this. But God does not accept such excuses.

¹⁴And the LORD God said to the serpent, “Because you have done this, you are cursed above all cattle and above every beast of the field. You will go about on your belly and eat dust all the days of your life. ¹⁵And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring. He will bruise your head, and you will bruise his heel”.

¹⁶To the woman he said, “I will greatly increase your suffering in childbirth. In pain you will bear children. And your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you”.

¹⁷And to Adam he said, “Because you listened to the voice of your wife, and ate of the tree concerning which I commanded you, saying, ‘You shall not eat of it’, the ground is cursed on your account; in painful toil you will eat its produce all the days of your life.

3:14 Sin brought a curse on all the world. The earth is not the same as it was before Adam’s fall (v 17; Rom 8:19-22).

3:15 Here is the first promise of a Saviour for fallen man. He would be born of the woman (the man is not mentioned here. Many scholars think this signifies the virgin birth of Christ. See Isa 7:14; Matt 1:22-23; Gal 4:5). The Saviour will be the bruiser of Satan’s head – that is, He will destroy Satan and his works (Rom 16:20; Heb 2:14; 1 John 3:8). The final overthrow of Satan is seen in the last book of the Bible (Rev 20:10). The serpent was to bruise the heel of the Saviour. He could hurt and wound Him but not destroy Him. And the wounding of the Saviour was for man’s benefit (Isa 53:5; 1 Pet 2:24).

“*Offspring*” – the Hebrew word means “seed”, “offspring”, “descendant”.

3:16 Since the fall of human beings into sin, woman is to be in subjection to the man (Eph 5:22; Col 3:18; 1 Tim 2:11-15; 1 Pet 3:1-5).

“*Suffering in childbirth*” – this seems to be the meaning rather than “suffering and childbirth” (KJV). On the word “and” see the note at 1:27.

3:17-19 Job 5:7; 14:1; Ps 90:3,9,10; Eccl 12:7.

3:17 “*In painful toil*” – in Hebrew this is the same word translated “suffering” in v 16. It has a variety of meanings – “suffering”, “sorrow”, “pain”, “hard labour”, etc.

3:21 It seems very probable that there is a picture here of God’s way of salvation by sacrifice and grace. Man’s attempts to hide his guilt and shame cannot succeed. He is not fit to stand before God in his own works. God Himself killed an innocent animal and clothed Adam and Eve. Much later in history God came in the person of Christ and died for sinners. He clothes those who come to Him in His own righteousness. What man is by nature is described in Isa 64:6. By God’s grace he

¹⁸It will also bring forth thorns and thistles for you, and you will eat the plants of the field. ¹⁹In the sweat of your face you will eat bread, until you return to the ground; for you were taken from it; for you are dust and you will return to dust”.

²⁰And Adam called his wife’s name Eve, because she was the mother of all living.

²¹The LORD God also made garments of skins for Adam and for his wife, and clothed them. ²²And the LORD God said, “See, the man has become like one of us, to know good and evil. And now, he *must not* put out his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever ²³Therefore the LORD God sent him out of the garden of Eden, to till the ground from which he was taken. ²⁴So he drove the man out, and at the east of the of the garden of Eden he placed cherubim and a flaming sword which

can have a perfect covering (Isa 61:10; 1 Cor 1:30). See notes on justification at Gen 15:6; Rom 1:17; 3:21-26; 4:5,23-25.

3:22 This verse shows that there was some truth in the serpent’s words in v 5. This is Satan’s method – to mix lies with truth to make it seem more attractive and believable. By sinning man did not become like God in God’s holy character – in fact, just the opposite of that happened. But in the one matter of knowing good and evil man became like his Creator.

“*Us*” – see 1:26.

“*Live forever*” – God will not let man live forever in this world in a sinful condition. If He did so it would be a terrible disaster. In the last book of the Bible the tree of life appears again (Rev 2:7; 22:14), and the way to it.

3:23-24 Man has lost paradise because sin and Paradise are mutually exclusive. Men must choose one or the other; they cannot have both (Rev 22:14). Man has not risen from lower forms of life. In Adam he has fallen from a higher state of life. Adam is the representative and progenitor of all mankind (Rom 5:12-19). He lost paradise for us all. The Bible is the story of God’s way of preparing man for Paradise again.

3:24 “*Cherubim*” – see Ex 25:18-22; Ezek 1:5-14; 10:1-10. In Hebrew cherubim is the plural of cherub (“im” indicating the plural form). In English adding an “s” to the word is unnecessary and obscures this fact. The cherubim are, it seems, heavenly beings always associated with God’s glory and holiness, or symbols related to God’s glory and holiness. Here they are guardians of the way to the garden.

In this chapter the results of man’s sin are very clear. They are still visible in the world today – shame, useless attempts to cover guilt, fear, trying to hide from God, vain excuses, a

turned every direction, to guard the way to the tree of life.

4 And Adam knew Eve his wife, and she conceived, and gave birth to Cain, and said, "I have gotten a man *by the help* of the LORD". ²And again, she gave birth to his brother Abel. And Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a cultivator of the ground.

³And in process of time it came about that Cain brought an offering to the LORD from the fruit of the ground. ⁴And Abel also brought *an offering*, of the firstborn of his flock and of their fat. And the LORD had regard for Abel and for his offering, ⁵but did not have regard for Cain and for his offering. And Cain was very angry, and his face was downcast.

⁶And the LORD said to Cain, "Why are you angry? and why is your face downcast? ⁷If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin lies at the door. And *its* desire is for you, and you should rule over it".

curse on creation, pain, bondage, and drudgery to mankind, death, and exclusion from Paradise. Man was made in God's image (1:26). By sinning that image became terribly marred. In the New Testament God's revealed purpose is to restore to fallen man the image of God in true righteousness and holiness (Eph 4:24), to have His people become like Christ (Rom 8:29; 1 John 3:2).

4:1 "*Knew*"— this is one way the Hebrews expressed sexual intimacy.

4:3 "*Offering*"— here is the first mention of offerings in the Bible. Who taught Cain and Abel to bring offerings to God? Evidently their parents, Adam and Eve. Who taught Adam and Eve? God Himself is the only one who could have. Why did God accept Abel's offering and reject Cain's? Heb 11:4 gives at least part of the answer. Abel offered a better sacrifice. How was it better? Judging from the rest of the Bible the answer seems to be that he brought a blood sacrifice. Throughout the Bible this is regarded as an offering for sin. See notes at Ex 12:1,7; Lev 1:5; 4:3; Heb 9:22. Abel came to God acknowledging that he was a sinner and that only a blood sacrifice could make atonement for his sin. On the other hand Cain, it seems, came in his pride and self-righteousness and with no sin offering.

Heb 11:4 tells us that Abel brought his offering by faith. This means he believed God and did what God had revealed should be done. True faith is always a response to some word or some revelation God has given. Cain is an illustration of Prov 14:12; 15:8. Cain and Abel represent the

⁸And Cain talked with his brother Abel, and it came about when they were in the field, that Cain attacked Abel his brother, and killed him.

⁹And the LORD said to Cain, "Where is your brother Abel?" And he said, "I don't know. *Am* I my brother's keeper?"

¹⁰And he said, "What have you done? The voice of your brother's blood cries out to me from the ground. ¹¹And now you *are* cursed from the ground which opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand. ¹²When you cultivate the ground, from now on it will not yield its strength to you. You will be a fugitive and a vagabond on the earth".

¹³And Cain said to the LORD, "My punishment *is* greater than I can bear. ¹⁴Look, today you have driven me out from the face of the ground, and I will be hidden from your face, and I will be a fugitive and a vagabond in the earth. And it will come about *that* anyone who finds me will kill me".

¹⁵And the LORD said to him, "Therefore whoever kills Cain will have sevenfold

two divisions of humanity. Abel took God's way. Cain took his own way. Abel is the first example of faith mentioned in the Bible (which does not necessarily mean that Adam and Eve did not have faith). Faith is exceedingly important in God's sight (15:6; 1 John 5:10; Hab 2:14; Matt 17:20; 21:21-22; Mark 9:23; 11:24; John 3:36; Heb 11:6). **4:6** Prov 19:3; 14:29.

4:7 Num 32:23.

"*Sin*"— this is the first mention of the word, though sin had already come into the world by the disobedience of Adam. From that time on it spread like poison in the bloodstream of humanity and affected (and still affects) every individual born into the world— except Christ. In this verse sin is pictured as a wild beast looking for a victim. Sin desires to devour every one of us. It must be overcome or it will destroy all. Sin is any lack of conformity to, or transgression of, God's law and character.

4:8 How quickly sin showed its violent and deadly character! Compare 1 John 3:12-15; Ps 38:20; Prov 29:10; Matt 23:35.

4:9 Cain shows his lying, loveless and arrogant nature.

4:10 Num 35:33; Heb 12:24; Rev 6:9-10.

4:11 "*Cursed*"— here are some of the results of sin: Separation from God's presence, loneliness, fear, depression and a curse on one's whole life. Compare Deut 28:15-19. These results we see everywhere in the world today. Cain was not put to death, but after the great flood God gave a new command concerning murder (9:5-6).

vengeance taken on him". And the LORD set a mark on Cain, so that no one finding him would kill him. ¹⁶And Cain went out from the presence of the LORD, and lived in the land of Nod, to the east of Eden.

¹⁷And Cain knew his wife, and she conceived, and gave birth to Enoch. And he built a city and called the name of the city Enoch, after the name of his son. ¹⁸And Irad was born to Enoch, and Irad fathered Mehujael, and Mehujael begot Methusael, and Methusael begot Lamech.

¹⁹And Lamech took for himself two wives: the name of the one was Adah, and the name of the other Zillah. ²⁰And Adah gave birth to Jabal. He was the father of those who live in tents, and of those who have cattle. ²¹And his brother's name was Jubal. He was the father of all those who play the harp and flute. ²²As for Zillah, she also gave birth to Tubal-Cain, a forger of every *kind of tool* in bronze and iron. And the sister of Tubal-Cain was Naamah.

²³And Lamech said to his wives,

"Adah and Zillah, hear my voice,
You wives of Lamech,

listen to my speech,
For I have killed a man
for wounding me,
And a young man for hurting me.

²⁴ If Cain will be avenged sevenfold,
then Lamech seventy *times*
sevenfold".

²⁵And Adam knew his wife again, and she gave birth to a son, and called his name Seth, "For God", she said, "has appointed me another offspring in place of Abel, whom Cain killed". ²⁶And also a son was born to Seth, and he called his name Enos. Then *men* began to call on the name of the LORD.

5 This is the book of the generations of Adam. In the day that God created man, he made him in the likeness of God. ²He created them male and female and blessed them, and called their name "man", on the day when they were created.

³And Adam lived a hundred and thirty years, and begot a *son* in his own likeness, according to his image, and called his name Seth. ⁴And after he had begotten Seth the days of Adam were eight hundred years, and he begot sons and daughters. ⁵And all

4:16 "*Out from the presence of the LORD*"— this is something that unbelievers often have little or no concern about, but that believers consider the worst kind of punishment. Compare Ps 51:11; 2 Thess 2:9.

"*Nod*"— this Hebrew word means "wandering".

4:17 Where did Cain get his wife? When Seth was born to Adam and Eve, Adam was 130 (5:3), and could have had a great many sons and daughters, grandsons and granddaughters and their offspring (1:28). These are not all named in the Bible because God had no purpose in doing so. Cain married one of Adam's descendants.

4:18-24 These verses give the line of ungodly Cain. We see its character in the boast of Lamech who gloried in revenge and murder. How different must be the behavior of God's people. Notes at Ex 21:23-25; Num 31:2. Observe also that the evil of polygamy first appears in this godless line. Note at Gen 30:1.

4:22 "*Forger of every kind of tool in*"— this could also be translated "an instructor of every craftsman in", though the translation above is probably closer to the meaning of the Hebrew.

4:25 Seth in Hebrew means granted or given.

4:26 "*Call on the name of the LORD*"— 12:8; 26:25; 1 Kings 18:24; Ps 116:17; Joel 2:32; Zeph 3:9; 1 Cor 1:2. With the departure of Cain from God's presence (v 16) mankind was divided into two

lines. This verse indicates that the line of Seth was the godly line through which God would make further revelation of His word and will. Seth's descendants prayed to the one true God, Jehovah. Note on Jehovah at Ex 3:14.

5:1-2 Gen 1:26-28.

"*In the day*"— See notes on "Evening" at 1:5, "day" at 2:2-4. Here day may mean a longer period of time than 24 hours. Adam and Eve were created at different times, and it is possible that these times were separated by more than 24 hours (2:7,15-22).

"*Man*"— in Hebrew Adam and man are the same word.

5:3 Adam was now a fallen, sinful man and his nature was passed on to his offspring, and so to succeeding generations and eventually to us (Job 14:4; Ps 51:5). We are all sinners by birth. See, for example, Rom 3:23.

In agreement with this is a well-known prayer used by Hindus for many centuries – "I am a sinner by birth and by deeds. My soul is depraved by sin; I am conceived in sin. Lord, save me, be merciful to me a sinner (Papoham, papakarmanam, papathma, papasambhava, pahimam kripaya Deva, sharanagata vatsala)". The godly line of Seth also was sinful.

5:4 Men lived to a great age before the flood of Noah's day. After that man's life span on earth became gradually shorter – note at 50:26.

the days that Adam lived were nine hundred and thirty years, and he died.

⁶And Seth lived a hundred and five years, and begot Enos. ⁷And after he begot Enos, Seth lived eight hundred and seven years, and begot sons and daughters. ⁸And all the days of Seth were nine hundred and twelve years, and he died.

⁹And Enos lived ninety years, and begot Cainan. ¹⁰And after he begot Cainan, Enos lived eight hundred and fifteen years, and begot sons and daughters. ¹¹And all the days of Enos were nine hundred and five years, and he died.

¹²And Cainan lived seventy years, and begot Mahalaleel. ¹³And after he begot Mahalaleel, Cainan lived eight hundred and forty years, and begot sons and daughters. ¹⁴And all the days of Cainan were nine

hundred and ten years, and he died.

¹⁵And Mahalaleel lived sixty five years, and begot Jared. ¹⁶And after he begot Jared, Mahalaleel lived eight hundred and thirty years, and begot sons and daughters. ¹⁷And all the days of Mahalaleel were eight hundred ninety-five years, and he died.

¹⁸And Jared lived a hundred and sixty-two years, and he begot Enoch. ¹⁹And after he begot Enoch, Jared lived eight hundred years, and begot sons and daughters. ²⁰And all the days of Jared were nine hundred sixty and two years, and he died. ²¹And Enoch lived sixty-five years, and begot Methuselah. ²²And after he begot Methuselah, Enoch walked with God three hundred years, and begot sons and daughters. ²³And all the days of Enoch were three hundred and sixty five years, ²⁴and Enoch walked with God, then

5:6-32 This list gives us the godly line of Seth until Noah who was the last righteous man on earth before the flood. There is no certainty that this list is complete and gives every person in the line between Adam and Noah. There are reasons for this lack of certainty.

In Biblical Hebrew “begot” or “became the father of” sometimes could mean “became the ancestor of”, with many generations missing. If the meaning here is “became the ancestor of” then, for example, “And Seth lived a hundred and five years and begot Enosh” would mean this: “At age 105 Seth had his first son who was in the direct line to Enosh” (who may have been the next generation after or several generations after). To become the ancestor of those who followed, the process had to begin at some age or other of the individual mentioned. This would mean too that only the names of the most outstanding men between Seth and Noah are given in this genealogy. Admittedly this is not the way we use language today in the English-speaking world, but that does not mean that the ancient Hebrews did not. For what may seem a strange use of language to us, see Ex 1:5. There the 70 persons who went into Egypt are all said to have come “from the loins of Jacob”, but that number included his sons’ wives and their children.

In Hebrew usage the word “son” (or “daughter”) sometimes means a descendant that came many generations later. For example, 1 Chron 26:24 in the Hebrew has Shubael the son of Gershom the son of Moses. It is true that Gershom was the son of Moses, but Shubael was born about 400 years later. Matt 1:1 has “a record of the genealogy of Jesus Christ the son of David, the son of Abraham”. Christ was born about 1000 years after David, and Abraham lived many centuries before David. So, according to Hebrew

usage we can say that Abraham was the father of David, even though Abraham lived centuries before David, and David was the father (meaning ancestor) of Jesus Christ. Would it also be off the mark to say that Abraham lived 100 years and became the father of David, the father of Jesus Christ? Not according to Hebrew usage, even though we know that at age 100 Abraham fathered Isaac who was also an ancestor of David. While we, in our culture, cannot reconcile this seeming inaccuracy, this was an understood cultural usage of the word “father” to the Hebrew.

We should also note that genealogies sometimes omitted names. Ezra 7:3 omits names given in 1 Chron 6:7-11, and Ezra is giving his own genealogy. Ruth 4:18-22 is another example of a genealogy with gaps in it. Matt 1:1-17 omits the names of three kings from the genealogy of Christ. See notes there on vs 1,8.

The Bible does not tell us how long mankind has been on earth and we would derive no spiritual benefit from knowing. And the author of these notes thinks that we can hardly estimate that time accurately by these genealogies, given the above uncertainties. The Bible was not given to satisfy our curiosity, but to point us to God the Creator and Saviour.

5:22 “*Walked with God*”– Gen 6:9; 17:1; 24:40; 48:15; Micah 6:8; Mal 2:6; 1 Thess 2:12; Amos 3:3; Lev 26:23-24. Evidently Enoch was a prophet (Jude 14). God must have promised him that he would not die, for we read in Heb 11:5 that it was by faith that he was caught up without seeing death. Faith is man’s response to a revelation from God. Only three people in the Bible were taken away from this world in the body – Enoch, Elijah (2 Kings 2:11), and the Lord Jesus (Luke 24:51). Enoch and Elijah did not die. Jesus did.

he was not *seen again*, for God took him.

²⁵And Methuselah lived a hundred and eighty-seven years, and begot Lamech.

²⁶And after he begot Lamech, Methuselah lived seven hundred and eighty-two years, and begot sons and daughters. ²⁷And all the days of Methuselah were nine hundred and sixty-nine years, and he died.

²⁸And Lamech lived a hundred and eighty-two years, and begot a son. ²⁹And he called his name Noah, saying, “This *one* will comfort us concerning our work and the toil of our hands, *arising from* the ground which the LORD has cursed”. ³⁰And after he begot Noah, Lamech lived five hundred and ninety-five years, and begot sons and daughters. ³¹And all the days of Lamech were seven hundred and seventy-seven years, and he died.

³²And Noah was five hundred years old, and Noah begot Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

6 And it came about when men began to increase *in number* on the face of the

earth, and daughters were born to them, ²that the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they *were* beautiful, and they took wives for themselves of all whom they chose. ³And the LORD said, “My spirit will not always strive with man, for he also *is* flesh. Yet his days will be a hundred and twenty years”.

⁴There were giants on the earth in those days, and also afterwards, when the sons of God came in to the daughters of men, and they gave birth to *children* by them. They *became* the mighty men who were of old, men of renown.

⁵And LORD saw that the wickedness of man in the earth was great, and *that* every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. ⁶And the LORD regretted that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him in his heart. ⁷And the LORD said, “I will destroy man whom I have created from the surface of the earth, both man, and beast, and creeping things, and the birds

6:2 “*The sons of God*”—there are two interpretations of this phrase. Some think they were fallen angels (2 Pet 2:4; Jude 6,7). Others think they were men from the godly line of Seth who married women of the ungodly line of Cain. The normal meaning of the phrase “sons of God” in the Old Testament (but not in the NT) is angels (Job 1:6; 2:1; 38:7; Dan 3:25).

6:3 “*Strive*”—God fights against men’s sins. He is utterly opposed to them and will eventually punish all of them (except those forgiven by the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ). God is long-suffering and patient, but He will not go on forever without punishing the guilty—Ex 34:6-7; Gal 5:16-17; 1 Pet 3:20; Ps 103:14; Prov 29:1. Compare Prov 1:22-32.

“*Hundred and twenty years*”—this probably means that God was giving mankind 120 years more before the judgment of the flood. There is some doubt about this because we cannot be certain whether these words were spoken before Noah reached the age of 500 (5:32), or afterwards. If they were spoken afterwards, then the period of time left before the flood was only 100 years or less. Compare 5:32 with 9:28-29. So it is possible that God here speaks of a time after the flood when men would live much shorter lives than they did before the flood. After the flood man’s life span gradually diminished until the time of Jacob and his sons. Then, at least for them, it reached approximately 120 years (Gen 47:9; 50:26). And possibly this was the life span until roughly the time of Moses (Moses died at the age of 120—Deut 34:7), at which time the life span

of man was again reduced (Ps 90:10).

6:5 See 5:3; 8:21; Mark 7:21-23; Jer 17:9. Here we see the terrible results of the one sin of Adam. Observe that sin begins as an inward thing, a depravity of the heart. Observe also that a person abandoned to his sinful nature will not have a single thought that God counts good. Let us not vainly imagine that we are better by nature than those who lived before the flood. See Rom 3:9,19,23; 7:18. If we do not believe the Bible’s statements regarding the depravity and sinfulness of the human race we will not understand God’s actions in judging and punishing individuals and peoples and nations. **6:6** God feels great grief at the fallen, sinful, unrepentant condition of men (Ps 78:40; Ezek 18:31-32; 33:11; Hos 11:8; Matt 23:37; Luke 9:41-42; Eph 4:30).

6:7 God is love (1 John 4:8). But this does not mean that He can forget holiness and justice, and spare the guilty and unrepentant (Ex 34:6-7; Deut 7:9-10; Rom 2:4-5). God is also the holy and just Judge and Ruler of the universe—18:25; 1 Sam 2:10; Ps 47:2 (see the note there); Ps 75:7; 94:2; 96:13; Ezek 7:3; Acts 17:31; 2 Tim 4:1; Rev 19:11. In Noah’s time only one godly man was left on the whole earth. Sin had reached such proportions that, for the good of the world, the God of justice had to punish it and destroy a perverted, rebellious, unbelieving and unrepentant generation of men.

After this time God also handed nations and whole civilizations over to destruction because of their sins. See notes on 15:16; Lev 18:24;

of the air, for I regret having made them".
⁸But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD.

⁹These are the generations of Noah: Noah was a righteous man and blameless in his time, and Noah walked with God. ¹⁰And Noah became the father of three sons: Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

¹¹The earth also was corrupt in the eyes of God and the earth was filled with violence. ¹²And God looked at the earth, and saw that it was corrupt, for all flesh had corrupted their way on the earth. ¹³And God said to Noah, "The end of all flesh has come in my presence, for the earth is filled with violence through them, and, look, I will destroy them with the earth. ¹⁴Make yourself an ark of gopher wood. You shall make rooms in the ark, and shall cover it inside and outside with pitch. ¹⁵And this is the way you shall make it: the length of the ark *shall be* three hundred cubits, its width fifty cubits, and its height thirty cubits. ¹⁶You shall make a window in the ark, and shall finish it to a cubit from the

top. And you shall put the door of the ark in its side. You shall make the ark with lower, second, and third *decks*. ¹⁷And, look, I, even I, am going to bring a flood of waters upon the earth, to destroy from under heaven all flesh *which has* the breath of life. Everything that is on the earth will die. ¹⁸But I will establish my covenant with you. And you shall come into the ark, you, and with you, your sons and your wife and your sons' wives. ¹⁹And you shall bring into the ark two of each *kind* of every living thing of all flesh, to keep *them* alive with you. They shall be male and female. ²⁰Two of each kind shall come to you, of birds according to their kind, and of cattle according to their kind, of every creeping thing of the earth according to its kind, two of every *kind* shall come to you, to keep *them* alive. ²¹And you shall gather for yourself some of every food that is eaten, and take it with you, and it will be for food for you and for them".

²²Noah did this. He did according to all that God commanded him.

Deut 13:12-18; 28:18-19. But when He did so He felt pain and grief. See Luke 19:41 and the notes at Jer 48:30-39. When God acts in judgment it is always for the good of those people who remain, the eventual good of humanity as a whole. And even in times of judgment any individual who looks to God for mercy will find it (Isa 55:6-7). See notes at 15:16 and Ps 47:2.

The Lord Jesus said that the condition of mankind at the end of this present age will be as it was in Noah's day (Matt 24:37-38).

6:8 1 Pet 3:20.

6:9 See 5:24; Ps 37:37-40. Noah was both a righteous man and a preacher of righteousness (2 Pet 2:5). He preached God's truth to that generation.

"*Blameless*"— see the notes at 17:1; Job 1:1.

6:11 Luke 17:26; Deut 31:29; Rom 3:15-18.

"*In the eyes of*"— the literal meaning of the Hebrew is "to (or in) the face", and means "in the presence of" or "before God" or "in front of". "In the eyes of" seems best to express the meaning here.

6:12 Even the godly line of Seth (4:26) was now completely corrupted except for Noah. Compare Ps 53:2-3.

6:13 Isa 24:1-6; 34:1-4; 1 Pet 4:7.

6:14 "*Gopher*"— it is unclear what kind of tree is meant by the Hebrew word here.

"*Pitch*"— we do not know exactly what substance this was. Our nearest understanding of the word would suggest that it was something like tar.

6:15 One cubit equals 18 inches.

6:16 "*A cubit from the top*"— it seems there were a series of openings all around the ark near the roof to let in light and air.

6:17 2 Pet 2:5.

6:18 In this verse the first use in the Bible of the word "covenant" occurs. It is a very important word, used nearly 300 times. The Hebrew word means an agreement between two or more parties (21:27; 26:28; 2 Sam 3:12-13), or a promise given by one party to another (Gen 9:8-11). Sometimes there were conditions laid down, sometimes not. There was often some sign given and a sacrifice offered in connection with the establishment of a covenant.

God made very important covenants with men on several occasions –

with Noah and all mankind (9:8-17);

with Abraham and his descendants (15:18-21);

with the nation Israel (Ex 19:5);

with David and his offspring (2 Sam 7:16);

and the New Covenant (Matt 26:27-29).

See notes at the above places. The first part of the Bible is called the Old Testament (or Covenant) because it has to do for the most part with God's covenant made with Israel at Sinai (Ex 19:5). The second part of the Bible is called the New Testament (or Covenant) because it has to do with the covenant Christ made with His disciples just before His crucifixion.

6:22 Noah did what God told him because he believed God – Heb 11:7. True faith always produces obedience and action (Jam 2:14,20,26). By this Noah was able to save his family too.

7 And the LORD said to Noah, “You, and all your household, come into the ark. For I have seen you as righteous in my eyes in this generation. ²You shall take for yourself seven of every clean beast, the male and its female, and two of beasts that are unclean, the male and its female, ³also seven each of the birds of the air, the male and the female, to keep offspring alive on the surface of the whole earth. ⁴For in seven more days I will cause it to rain on the earth forty days and forty nights, and I will destroy from the surface of the earth every living substance that I have made”.

⁵And Noah did according to all that the LORD commanded him.

⁶And Noah was six hundred years old when the flood of waters was on the earth. ⁷And Noah went into the ark, and with him, his sons and his wife and his sons’ wives, because of the waters of the flood. ⁸Of clean beasts and of unclean beasts and of birds and of every creeping thing on the earth, ⁹two by two, the male and the female, went in to Noah into the ark, as God had commanded Noah. ¹⁰And it came about after seven days that the waters of the flood were on the earth.

¹¹In the six hundredth year of Noah’s life, in the second month, the seventeenth day of the month, that very day, all the fountains of the great deep were broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened. ¹²And the rain was on the earth forty days and forty nights.

¹³On that very day Noah and Shem and Ham and Japheth, the sons of Noah, and

7:2 On “unclean animals” see Lev 11:1-31; Deut 14:3-20; Acts 10:9-16; 1 Tim 4:3-4.

7:11 The waters of the flood came from two sources – water underneath the ocean bed which was released, and torrential rains from above. Before the flood there may have been huge quantities of water trapped under pressure beneath the ocean floor. Whatever was there now burst out and, together with the large amount of rain falling from the sky, greatly raised the level of the water in the oceans, and covered the hills and mountains.

7:16 God shut the door, not to keep Noah from getting out, but to keep anyone else from getting in. God’s judgment was to be complete on a very wicked generation. The day of opportunity to be saved was over. Justice now triumphed over wickedness. Compare Prov 1:24-33; 29:1; Isa 55:6-7; 2 Cor 6:2.

7:19 “Mountains” – not “hills” (as in the KJV). In Hebrew the word is the same as the word translated “mountains” in the next verse. The word means “mountains” and “hills”, but in the

Noah’s wife, and the three wives of his sons with them, went into the ark, ¹⁴they, and every beast according to its kind, and all the cattle according to their kind, and every creeping thing that creeps on the earth according to its kind, and every bird according to its kind, every bird of every sort. ¹⁵And they went into the ark to Noah, two by two of all flesh which had the breath of life. ¹⁶And those that went in, went in male and female of all flesh, as God had commanded him. And the LORD shut him in.

¹⁷And the flood kept coming on the earth for forty days, and the waters increased, and lifted up the ark, and it rose up above the earth. ¹⁸And the waters were powerful and greatly increased on the earth, and the ark went on the surface of the waters. ¹⁹And the waters grew exceedingly powerful on the earth, and all the high mountains that were under the whole heaven, were covered. ²⁰The waters powerfully rose fifteen cubits higher, and the mountains were covered.

²¹And all flesh that moved on the earth, both of fowl and of cattle and of beast and of every creeping thing that creeps on the earth, and every man, died. ²²All in whose nostrils was the breath of life, of all that was on the dry land, died. ²³And every living thing which was on the face of the earth was destroyed, both man and cattle and creeping things and the birds of the sky. They were destroyed from the earth, and only Noah, and those who were with him in the ark, remained *alive*.

²⁴And the waters remained powerful on the earth for a hundred and fifty days.

context “mountains” seems the better translation. **7:20** “Cubits” – or “The waters powerfully rose and covered the mountains to a depth of fifteen cubits” (nearly 7 meters).

7:24 From the language of verses 19-24 it seems clear that the flood was worldwide. This is indicated by the height of the waters (see 8:4), the extent of the destruction (see 9:15), and the length of time the flood waters remained on earth (8:13-14). These things could be said of no local flood. See also 2 Pet 3:3-7. We cannot set a date for the flood, nor is it necessary that we do so (see note on 5:5-32). The date is not important. The important thing is the spiritual lessons we can learn from that event. These are: Sin will bring God’s judgment; God is grieved when He must judge and condemn men to destruction, but will do so for the sake of His justice, and for the good of those who remain. He will save those who trust in Him. The ark is a picture of the Lord Jesus Christ who saves His believing people from God’s wrath against sin.

8 And God remembered Noah, and every living thing, and all the cattle that was with him in the ark, and God made a wind to pass over the earth, and the waters subsided. ²Also the fountains of the deep and the windows of heaven were closed, and the rain from heaven was stopped, ³and the waters steadily receded from the earth. And at the end of a hundred and fifty days the waters decreased. ⁴And in the seventh month, on the seventeenth day of the month, the ark came to rest on the mountains of Ararat. ⁵And the waters decreased continually until the tenth month. In the tenth *month*, on the first *day* of the month, the tops of the mountains appeared.

⁶And it came about at the end of forty days, that Noah opened the window of the ark which he had made. ⁷And he sent out a raven, which flew here and there until the waters were dried up from the earth. ⁸He also sent out a dove from him, to see if the waters had receded from the surface of the earth; ⁹but the dove found no rest for the sole of her foot, and so she returned to him in the ark, for the waters *still covered* the surface of the whole earth. Then he put out his hand, and took her, and brought her in to him in the ark. ¹⁰And he waited still another seven days, and *then* again he sent out the dove from the ark. ¹¹And the dove came to him in the evening, and there in her mouth was

a plucked olive leaf. So Noah knew that the waters had receded from the earth. ¹²And he waited still another seven days, and sent out the dove. She did not return again to him any more.

¹³And it came about in the six hundred and first year, in the first *month*, on the first *day* of the month, that the waters were dried up from the earth. And Noah removed the covering of the ark and looked out, and now the surface of the earth was dry. ¹⁴And in the second month, on the twenty-seventh day of the month, the earth was dry.

¹⁵And God spoke to Noah, saying, ¹⁶“Go out of the ark, you and your wife and your sons and your sons’ wives with you. ¹⁷Bring out with you every living thing that is with you, all flesh, both of birds, and of cattle, and of every creeping thing that creeps on the earth, so that they may breed abundantly on the earth, and be fruitful, and increase *in number* on the earth”.

¹⁸And Noah and his sons and his wife and his sons’ wives with him went out. ¹⁹Every beast, every creeping thing, and every bird, and whatever crawls on the earth, according to their kinds, went out of the ark.

²⁰And Noah built an altar to the LORD, and took of every clean beast, and of every clean bird, and offered burnt offerings on the altar. ²¹And the LORD smelled the soothing aroma, and the LORD said in his

8:1 “*God remembered*”— compare 19:29; 30:22; Ex 2:24; 1 Sam 1:19; Ps 105:42; Isa 49:15-16; Heb 6:10. The Hebrew word translated “remember” includes the idea of showing loving concern for someone.

8:2 Ararat is a group of mountain peaks in northeastern Turkey. The highest peak is nearly 4,300 meters high.

8:3 “*Waters steadily receded*”— an immense amount of water was required to produce the kind of flood described in chapter 7. As the water receded where did it go? Verse 2 says that the fountains of the deep were “closed”. This means that they no longer gave out water. It would seem that great quantities of water had been stored in huge caverns under the ocean beds of the earth. This was released at the time of the flood, greatly increasing the amount of water in the oceans. Then God closed the fountains so that they no longer gave out water. But the caverns were still there and it seems likely that the flood waters slowly drained back into them.

8:13-14 The flood began in Noah’s 600th year, 2nd month, 17th day (7:11). The waters were completely dried up in his 601st year, 2nd month, 27th day. The total time was one year and eleven days, according

to the method they used for determining a year. (The Hebrews determined their days and years by the movement of the moon. The total time according to the system we use now, based on the movements of earth and sun, was exactly a year). The flood was at its full power for 150 days (7:24). This shows that the flood was worldwide and not merely over the area where Noah was. No local flood would be at its height for so long, or rise so high, or take so long to recede.

8:20 “*Altar*”— 12:7-8; 13:18; 22:9. This is the first mention of an altar (the word is used more than 400 times in the Bible), or of a burnt offering. Note on burnt offering at Lev 1:1-7. Worship of the true God springs up in the hearts of those to whom He reveals Himself.

8:21 “*Soothing aroma*”— the worship of believing, obedient hearts is pleasing to God. In the Old Testament their sacrifices were like a pleasing aroma also because they spoke of Christ. Note at Lev 1:9. The word translated “soothing” is from a Hebrew word meaning (among other things) “to give rest to, to quieten”. Possibly the word indicates that the “soothing aroma” of burnt offerings alleviate God’s wrath against man’s sin (because it spoke of the then future sacrifice of Christ).

heart, “Never again will I curse the ground on man’s account. For the imagination of man’s heart is evil from his youth. And never again will I destroy every living thing, as I have done. ²²While the earth remains, seed time and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night will not cease”.

9 And God blessed Noah and his sons, and said to them, “Be fruitful and increase *in number* and fill the earth. ²And the fear of you and the dread of you will be on every beast of the earth, and on every bird of the air, on all that moves *on* the earth, and on all the fish of the sea. They are given into your hands. ³Every moving thing that lives will be food for you. I have given you everything, just as *I gave* the green plants.

⁴“But flesh with its life, *which is* its blood, you shall not eat. ⁵And I will certainly require *punishment for* your lifeblood. I will require it at the hand of every beast, and at the hand of man. I will require *punishment for* the life of a man at the hand of every man’s brother. ⁶Whoever sheds man’s blood, by man will his blood be shed; for in the image of God he made man. ⁷And you, be fruitful and increase *in number*. Bring forth abundantly on the earth and increase in it”.

⁸And God spoke to Noah and to his sons with him, saying, ⁹“And, see, I am establishing my covenant with you, and with your offspring after you, ¹⁰and with every living creature that is with you, the

birds, the cattle, and every beast of the earth with you, from all that go out of the ark, to every beast of the earth. ¹¹And I establish my covenant with you; never again will all flesh be cut down by the waters of a flood, and never again will there be a flood to destroy the earth”.

¹²And God said, “This *is* the sign of the covenant which I make between me and you and every living creature that *is* with you, for all succeeding generations: ¹³I set my bow in the cloud, and it will be for a sign of the covenant between me and the earth. ¹⁴And it will come about when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the bow will appear in the cloud, ¹⁵and I will remember my covenant, which *is* between me and you and every living creature of every *kind of* flesh. And the waters will not again become a flood to destroy all flesh. ¹⁶And the bow will be in the cloud, and I will look at it, so that I may remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of every *kind of* flesh on the earth”.

¹⁷And God said to Noah, “This *is* the sign of the covenant which I have established between me and all flesh on the earth”.

¹⁸And the sons of Noah who went out of the ark were Shem, Ham, and Japheth. And Ham was the father of Canaan. ¹⁹These were the three sons of Noah. And from them *people* spread over the whole earth.

²⁰And Noah was a man *who tilled* the soil, and he planted a vineyard, ²¹and drank of the wine and became drunk. And he was

“*Evil from his youth*”—every child is born into the world with a sinful nature. So every inclination of his heart will be away from God’s holy standards. His thoughts and desires will be self-centered, not God-centered. It will be necessary to teach him to do right—the wrong he will do by nature (4:7; 5:3; Ps 51:5; 58:3; Rom 3:9-23; 7:18).

9:1 All peoples and nations on earth today are Noah’s descendants.

9:2-7 There are two changes now introduced which indicate a new order of things on earth. God now gives man permission to eat meat (compare 1:29), and commands capital punishment for murder (compare 4:15). Observe that at this time there was no distinction made between “clean” and “unclean” animals for food. Man could eat any that he chose. Compare Leviticus chapter 11.

9:4 Lev 7:26-27; 17:10-16; 19:26; Deut 12:16,23; 15:23; Acts 15:20,29.

9:5 Ex 21:12,28,29.

9:6 Lev 24:17; Num 35:33. Man, though terribly fallen, is still in some respects in the image of

God (Jam 3:9).

9:9-11 Judging from v 10, this covenant with Noah is more like a simple promise, not an agreement. Certainly animals could not enter into an agreement with God.

9:12-17 This bow, called by many in India “Indra’s bow”, has nothing whatever to do with Indra. The rainbow is a sign of the true God’s faithfulness to His covenant. The rainbow is associated with God’s presence in Ezek 1:28 and Rev 4:3.

9:19 See 10:32.

9:21 The Bible does not conceal the faults and sins of God’s people. It tells things as they are. In this case it is uncertain whether Noah had ever drunk wine before or knew what it could do to him. When he realized it was affecting him he should have stopped drinking but this would probably have been very difficult (compare Prov 20:1; 23:29-35). Drunkenness is condemned in the Bible and its results are shown to be disastrous (19:30; Isa 5:11,22; Rom 13:13; 1 Cor 5:11; 6:10; Gal 5:21; Eph 5:18).

uncovered inside his tent. ²²And Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father, and told his two brothers outside. ²³And Shem and Japheth took a garment and put it on both their shoulders and walked backwards and covered the nakedness of their father. And their faces were turned away and they did not see their father's nakedness.

²⁴And Noah awoke from his wine, and came to know what his younger son had done to him. ²⁵And he said, "Cursed be Canaan. He will be a servant of servants to his brothers".

²⁶And he said, "Blessed be the LORD, the God of Shem, and Canaan shall be his servant. ²⁷God will enlarge Japheth and he will live in the tents of Shem. And Canaan will be his servant". ²⁸And Noah lived after the flood for three hundred and fifty years. ²⁹And all the days of Noah were nine hundred and fifty years, and he died.

10 Now these are the generations of the sons of Noah, Shem, Ham, and Japheth. After the flood sons were born to them.

²The sons of Japheth: Gomer, Magog, Madai, Javan, Tubal, Meshech, and Tiras. ³And the sons of Gomer: Ashkenaz, Riphath,

9:22 Ham, instead of covering his father's shame, told others about it. He did not show the proper love and respect for his father (Ex 20:12; 1 Pet 4:8). It seems that he had a perverted mind.

9:25-27 Three prophecies are here (compare 49:1; Deut 33:1). Concerning Ham (v 25) – as a son he had not shown the proper behavior, so judgment would come on one of his sons. Perhaps Canaan was with his father when the above event occurred. We do not know. But we do know that God always acts in perfect justice. This prediction was at least partially fulfilled when Israel subdued the Canaanites in the land of Canaan many centuries later (Josh 9:23; 1 Kings 9:20-21).

Concerning Shem (v 26) – Jehovah was already the God of Shem. This suggests Shem's faith. The God of Shem would bring His blessings into the world through Abraham, the nation Israel, and Jesus Christ all of whom were descendants of Shem.

Concerning Japheth (v 27) – this may possibly speak of the coming of vast numbers of Gentiles into the Christian fold (Eph 3:6). "Live in the tents of" suggests entering into the blessings of Shem, and God brought salvation to the world through

and Togarmah. ⁴And the sons of Javan: Elishah, Tarshish, Kittim, and Dodanim. ⁵From these the coast lands of the Gentiles were divided in their lands, each one according to his language, according to their families, in their nations.

⁶And the sons of Ham: Cush, Mizraim, Phut, and Canaan. ⁷And the sons of Cush: Seba, Havilah, Sabtah, Raamah, and Sabtechah. And the sons of Raamah: Sheba and Dedan.

⁸And Cush begot Nimrod. Nimrod became a mighty one in the earth. ⁹He was a mighty hunter in the eyes of the LORD. Therefore it is said, "Just like Nimrod the mighty hunter in the eyes of the LORD". ¹⁰And the beginning of his kingdom was Babel, Erech, Accad, and Calneh, in the land of Shinar. ¹¹From that land he went to Assyria and built Nineveh and the city Rehoboth, and Calah, ¹²and Resen between Nineveh and Calah. This is a great city.

¹³And Mizraim begot Ludim, Anamim, Lehabim, Naphtuhim, ¹⁴Pathrusim, Casluhim (from whom came the Philistines), and Caphtorim. ¹⁵And Canaan begot Sidon his firstborn, Heth, ¹⁶and the Jebusite, the Amorite, the Girgashite, ¹⁷the Hivite, the Arkite, the Sinite, ¹⁸the Arvadite, the Zemarite, and the Hamathite. And

the descendants of Shem (11:10; John 4:22).

10:2-5 These are ancestors of peoples which settled in regions generally north, northwest, and northeast of Israel. Javan is present-day Greece. "Sons" (verses 2,3,4,6,7,20-23,29,31) – in Hebrew usage the word "sons" sometimes means "descendants" or "successors" or "peoples". See note on 5:6-32.

10:6-7 Ancestors of peoples which settled east, south, and southwest of Israel. It seems there were two regions named Cush. One included a part of present-day Ethiopia, the other was in the neighborhood of present-day Iraq. Mizraim is another name for Egypt.

10:8-12 Nimrod had to do with some cities that became prominent in Bible times. Both Nineveh and Babylon were destroyed long ago.

10:8 "Begot" – in Hebrew usage this word is sometimes used to mean "became the ancestor of" or "predecessor of". Note on 5:6-32.

10:14 The Philistines lived along the coast of the Mediterranean Sea and come to prominence in the Biblical story during the times of the judges and early kings of Israel.

10:15-19 Some of these peoples occupied the land of Canaan before the nation of Israel dispossessed them (Ex 3:8,17; Josh 24:11).

afterwards the families of the Canaanites were scattered.

¹⁹And the border of the Canaanites was from Sidon, as you come to Gerar, to Gaza; as you go to Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, and Zeboim, as far as Lasha.

²⁰These were the sons of Ham, according to their families, according to their languages, in their countries, *and* in their nations.

²¹As for Shem, the father of all the children of Eber and the brother of Japheth the elder, to him also children were born.

²²The children of Shem: Elam, Asshur, Arphaxad, Lud, and Aram. ²³And the children of Aram: Uz, Hul, Gether, and Mash. ²⁴And Arphaxad begot Salah, and Salah begot Eber. ²⁵And two sons were born to Eber. The name of one was Peleg, for in his days the earth was divided. His brother's name was Joktan. ²⁶And Joktan begot Almodad, Sheleph, Hazarmaveth, Jerah, ²⁷Hadoram, Uzal, Diklah, ²⁸Obal, Abimael, Sheba, ²⁹Ophir, Havilah, and Jobab. All these were the sons of Joktan.

³⁰And their location was from Mesha, as you go to Sephar, a hill in the east.

³¹These are the sons of Shem, according to their families, according to their languages, according to their nations.

³²These are the families of the sons of Noah, according to their generations, in their nations.

11 And from among them, after the flood, the nations of the earth were divided. And the whole earth had one language, and one speech. ²And it came about that as they journeyed from the east, they found a plain in the land of Shinar, and they lived there.

³And they said to one another, "Come on, let us make bricks and bake *them* thoroughly". And they had brick instead of stone, and they had tar instead of mortar. ⁴And they said, "Come on, let us build for ourselves a city and a tower, the top of which *will reach* to heaven, and let us make a name for ourselves, so we won't be scattered over the surface of the whole earth".

⁵And the LORD came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of men built. ⁶And the LORD said, "See, the people *are* one and they all have one language, and they have started to do this, and so now nothing that they have planned to do will be kept from them. ⁷Come, let us go down and there confuse their language so that they cannot understand one another's speech".

⁸So the LORD scattered them from there over the whole surface of the earth. And they stopped building the city. ⁹Therefore its name is called Babel, because there the LORD confused the language of the whole earth, and the LORD scattered them from there over the surface of the whole earth.

¹⁰These *are* the generations of Shem:

10:21-31 Shem was the ancestor of Abraham, and of the nation of Israel.

10:21 Note on Eber at 11:15.

10:23 "*Mash*"— or "Meshech".

10:25 Peleg means "divided".

11:1 We do not know what this one language was.

11:2 "*Shinar*"— this was the name of the region where the city of Babylon was built. It was located in what is now called Iraq.

11:3 "*Come on*"— this is closer to the Hebrew than "go to" (KJV), an expression common in England 400 years ago, but no longer in use. The Hebrew word usually means "come".

11:4-9 The building of Babel was contrary to God's instructions in 9:1. The language in v 4 indicates pride and self-glorification as the motive for the building of the city. Later in history Nebuchadnezzar built a very great and mighty city there which caused him to boast in his power (Dan 4:30). The name Babylon in Scripture is usually associated with man's pride and defiance of God (Isa 47:8; Jer 50:24,29,32; Dan 4:30; 5:1-4; Rev 17:4-6; 18:7). Babylon was a center of idolatry and false religion and persecution of God's people.

The name Babel may have two meanings. It probably means (as many have suggested) "the gate of God". This is what the people who built it might have thought. Babel may also be derived from a Hebrew word meaning "to confuse". What men boast of as a gateway to God is in God's sight mere confusion. God will eventually destroy all such proud achievements of men and bring their pride into the dust (Lev 26:18-19; Prov 15:25; 16:18; Isa 2:17-22; 25:11; Jer 13:9; 49:16; Dan 4:37; Zeph 2:8-10; Jam 4:6; 1 Pet 5:5; Rev 18:7-8).

11:5 "*Came down*"— compare 18:21 (note).

11:6 In other words they would exalt themselves very highly against God and His purposes in the earth.

11:8 This was the very thing they did not want, but which God saw was good (v 4; 9:1). God will accomplish His purposes in spite of rebellious men.

11:9 Ps 92:9; Luke 1:51. Babel sounds like the Hebrew word for confused. Diversity of language came about because of man's pride and disobedience. What a trouble the language problem has been through the centuries, and still is!

Shem was a hundred years old, and begot Arphaxad two years after the flood. ¹¹And after he begot Arphaxad, Shem lived five hundred years, and begot sons and daughters.

¹²And Arphaxad lived thirty-five years, and begot Salah. ¹³And after he begot Salah, Arphaxad lived four hundred and three years, and begot sons and daughters.

¹⁴And Salah lived thirty years, and begot Eber. ¹⁵And after he begot Eber, Salah lived four hundred and three years, and begot sons and daughters.

¹⁶And Eber lived four and thirty years, and begot Peleg. ¹⁷And after he begot Peleg, Eber lived four hundred and thirty years, and begot sons and daughters.

¹⁸And Peleg lived thirty years, and begot Reu. ¹⁹And after he begot Reu, Peleg lived two hundred and nine years, and begot sons and daughters.

²⁰And Reu lived two and thirty years, and begot Serug. ²¹And after he begot Serug Reu lived two hundred and seven years, and begot sons and daughters.

²²And Serug lived thirty years, and begot Nahor. ²³And after he begot Nahor Serug lived two hundred years, and begot sons and daughters.

²⁴And Nahor lived nine and twenty years, and begot Terah. ²⁵And after he begot Terah, Nahor lived a hundred and nineteen years,

and begot sons and daughters.

²⁶And Terah lived seventy years, and begot Abram, Nahor, and Haran.

²⁷Now these are the generations of Terah: Terah begot Abram, Nahor, and Haran; and Haran begot Lot. ²⁸And Haran died before his father Terah in the land of his birth, in Ur of the Chaldees. ²⁹And Abram and Nahor took wives for themselves. The name of Abram's wife was Sarai, and the name of Nahor's wife, Milcah, the daughter of Haran *who was the father of Milcah*, and the father of Iscah. ³⁰But Sarai was barren; she had no child.

³¹And Terah took Abram his son and Lot the son of Haran his grandson, and Sarai his daughter-in-law, his son Abram's wife, and they left Ur of the Chaldees together to go to the land of Canaan. And they came to Haran and lived there.

³²And the days of Terah were two hundred and five years, and Terah died in Haran.

12 Now the LORD had said to Abram, "Go out of your country and from your relatives and from your father's house to a land that I will show you, ²and I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, and you will be a blessing. ³And I will bless those who bless you, and curse him who curses

11:10 "Begot" (also vs 11-25) – see note at 10:8. Israel was descended from Shem. With the following genealogy the story of the people of Israel really begins. It continues through much of the rest of the Bible. Once again humanity is divided into two lines, and God chose the line of Shem as the one through whom He would teach the world great things. His purpose in this was to bring great blessing to all nations.

11:16 The word Hebrew may have come from the word Eber.

11:28 "Ur" – a large city in the land of Babylon. It was a center of moon worship and other idolatry (Josh 24:2).

11:31 "Haran" – a city in what is now called Syria.

12:1 The call of Abraham was a great new beginning in the Bible. It took place about 1900 years before Christ. From now until the book of Acts in the New Testament for the most part we have the story of Abraham and his descendants. He was the father of the Jewish people, and because of his great faith in God he is called the father of all who trust in God (Rom 4:11). He is called also the servant of God (26:24), a prophet (20:7), and the father of the nation Israel (Isa 51:2; Rom 4:1). But probably his greatest name

is "the friend of God" (Isa 41:8; Jam 2:23). It all began by simple faith and obedience to God's call (Heb 11:8-10).

12:2 "Great nation" – see 17:4-8; 18:17-18; 22:17; 46:3; Ex 1:7; Deut 26:5.

"Bless" – blessing may mean either material or spiritual blessing. Spiritual blessings, of course, are far more important than material (Matt 5:3-12; Luke 6:20-26). Material blessings are temporary, spiritual blessings are related to eternity (compare Eph 1:3; Matt 6:19-21). On blessing see notes at v 3; 24:35; Num 6:22-27; Deut 28:3-14; Ps 1:1-2; Matt 5:3. Observe that Abraham not only received God's blessing, he became a blessing to others.

12:3 "Bless" – 22:18-19-21; 26:4; 28:14; Acts 3:25-26; Gal 3:8-9. Faith in God and obedience to Him bring great blessing, not only to the individual who practices them but to many others.

"Curse" – to oppose and speak evil of the one chosen by God is the same as opposing and speaking evil of God who chose him. And it is to reject God's purpose through him. Cursing such a person will bring a curse on those who do it. In some important respects God in perfect justice deals with people as they deal with others (Ps 18:25-26).

you. And in you all families of the earth will be blessed”.

⁴So Abram left, just as the LORD had spoken to him, and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he went out of Haran. ⁵And Abram took Sarai his wife, and Lot his brother’s son, and all their possessions that they had accumulated, and the persons whom they had gotten in Haran, and they went away to go to the land of Canaan. And into the land of Canaan they came.

⁶And Abram passed through the land as far as the place *called* Shechem, to the plain of Moreh. And the Canaanites were then in the land.

⁷And the LORD appeared to Abram and said, “To your offspring I will give this land”. And he built an altar there to the LORD, who appeared to him.

⁸And he moved from there to a mountain to the east of Bethel, and pitched his tent, *having* Bethel on the west, and Ai on the east; and there he built an altar to the LORD

and called on the name of the LORD. ⁹And Abram traveled on, still going toward the south.

¹⁰And there was a famine in the land, and Abram went down to Egypt to stay there for a time, for the famine was severe in the land. ¹¹And it came about when he was approaching Egypt he said to Sarai his wife, “Look, I know that you *are* a beautiful woman to see. ¹²Therefore it will happen that when the Egyptians see you, they will say, ‘This *is* his wife’, and they will kill me, but will keep you alive. ¹³So please say *that* you *are* my sister, so that it may go well with me on your account, and my soul will live because of you”.

¹⁴And it came about that when Abram came into Egypt, the Egyptians saw that the woman was very beautiful. ¹⁵The princes of Pharaoh also saw her, and praised her to Pharaoh, and so the woman was taken into Pharaoh’s house. ¹⁶And he treated Abram well on her account, and he got sheep, and oxen, and donkeys, and male and female

“All families of the earth”— the God of the Bible is the God Who created the universe, the God Who made all nations. He is love (1 John 4:8), and delights to bring blessing to all peoples, especially the blessing of salvation and eternal life. These blessings come through Abraham because Jesus Christ, according to His human nature, was a descendant of Abraham. Through Christ salvation has become available to all the peoples on earth, including all the various language groups of India. See Gal 3:8-9; John 4:22; Isa 2:3; Rom 9:4-5. The promised blessing of God was not just for one little nation, but for the whole world. Other notes on blessing or blessed at Num 6:22-27; Deut 28:3-14; Ps 1:1-3; 119:1; Matt 5:3-12; Luke 11:28; Acts 3:26; Eph 1:3. See in Gal 3:9,14 how God’s blessing can come on anyone.

12:5 Canaan, or at least part of what was called Canaan, is present-day Israel.

12:6 *“Canaanites”*— see 10:15-19.

12:7 *“Land”*— 13:15; 15:18; 17:8; Josh 1:2-4; 23:4-5; Ps 105:8-12. The land of Israel belongs to the Jews by God’s promise.

“Altar”— 8:20.

“Appeared”— God sometimes appeared on earth in the form of a man or an angel to speak with men and to work His will— 3:18; 16:7; 18:1-3; 26:2. God as Spirit is everywhere unseen and unheard by men. In dealing with men He thought it good at times to assume visible form.

12:8 *“Bethel”*— the first mention of this important place in Old Testament history. It is mentioned more than any other town except Jerusalem. It was a few kilometers north of Jerusalem.

“Name of the LORD”— 2:4; 4:26; 13:4.

12:9 *“The south”*— Hebrew has “Negev”, the name for the desert-like region in the south of Canaan.

12:10 It is not written that God told Abraham to leave Canaan. Perhaps the famine was meant as a test to strengthen his faith and build his character (Ps 66:10-12; Jam 1:2-4,12; 1 Pet 1:6-7). By going down to Egypt to escape the trial he got into difficulties and brought difficulties to others.

12:13 Abraham’s statement was a half-truth. Sarai was his half-sister (20:12). This marriage took place in Ur of Chaldea before God called Abraham. God later forbade marriage between such close relatives. Abraham meant to deceive the King of Egypt and this was sin. The Bible does not try to hide the sins and failures of God’s people. All have a sinful nature and all have sinned (Rom 3:23; 1 John 1:8,10). God could have protected Abraham without Abraham’s resorting to deception. See notes at 27:18-26; Josh 2:5; 1 Sam 27:10; 2 Sam 15:34.

“Please”— though the KJV has “I pray thee”, that is hardly a literal translation of the Hebrew, which here is only two letters joined to the end of the verb “say”. In Hebrew these letters are often joined to a verb. This was probably only a polite way of speaking, so we have translated it “please”. The KJV translated the same letters in other ways (for example “now” in Gen 18:27). Some versions omit it altogether, without changing the basic meaning.

12:15 *“Pharaoh”*— this was not a personal name but the title of successive rulers of Egypt much in the same way we would say ‘king’ or ‘maharaja’.

servants, and female donkeys, and camels.

¹⁷And the LORD struck Pharaoh and his household with great plagues because of Abram's wife Sarai. ¹⁸And Pharaoh called Abram and said, "What is this you have done to me? Why did you not tell me that she is your wife? ¹⁹Why did you say 'She is my sister?' I was going to take her as a wife for myself. Now then, see your wife. Take her and go". ²⁰And Pharaoh gave a command to his men concerning him, and they sent him away, and his wife, and all that he had.

13 And Abram went up from Egypt, he and his wife and all that he had, and Lot went with him, into the south of Canaan. ²And Abram was very rich in cattle, in silver and in gold. ³And he went on his journeys from the south as far as Bethel, to the place where his tent had been at the beginning, between Bethel and Ai, ⁴to the place of the altar which he had first made there. And there Abram called on the name of the LORD.

⁵And Lot also, who went with Abram, had flocks, and herds, and tents. ⁶And the land was not able to support them while they were living together, for their possessions were great, so that they could not live together. ⁷And there was strife between the herdsmen of Abram's cattle and the herdsmen of Lot's cattle, and the Canaanite and the Perizzite were then living in the land.

⁸And Abram said to Lot, "Please, let there be no strife between me and you and between my herdsmen and your herdsmen, for we are brothers. ⁹Is not the whole land before you? Please separate yourself from

me. If you take the left, then I will go to the right; or if you take the right, then I will go to the left".

¹⁰And Lot raised his eyes, and saw all the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered everywhere, (*this was before the LORD destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah*), like the garden of the LORD, like the land of Egypt, as you come to Zoar. ¹¹Then Lot chose for himself all the plain of Jordan, and Lot traveled east. And so they separated themselves from one another. ¹²Abram lived in the land of Canaan, and Lot lived in the cities of the plain, and pitched his tent toward Sodom. ¹³But the men of Sodom were wicked and sinners against the LORD, exceedingly so.

¹⁴And after Lot had separated from him, the LORD said to Abram, "Raise your eyes and from the place where you are look northward and southward and eastward and westward, ¹⁵for I will give all the land which you see to you and to your offspring forever. ¹⁶And I will make your offspring like the dust of the earth, so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, then your offspring also will be numbered. ¹⁷Get up, walk over the land, through its length and breadth; for I will give it to you".

¹⁸Then Abram moved his tent and came and lived by the oak trees of Mamre, which are in Hebron, and there built an altar to the LORD.

14 And this happened in the days of Amraphel king of Shinar, Arioch king of Ellasar, Chedorlaomer king of Elam, and Tidal king of nations: ²these men made war

12:17 Though the fault was Abraham's, God did this to preserve the integrity of Abraham's marriage and to fulfill later His purposes in Abraham and Sarai. Observe that God Himself may send diseases in judgment. See also Ex 15:26; 2 Kings 5:27; 15:5. This does not mean that all diseases are sent by God. Compare Job 2:7.

12:18 See how one man's sin can affect others.

13:1 "South"—literally, "Negev"—12:9.

13:4 "Called on the name of the LORD"—4:26; 12:8.

13:5 "Lot"—12:5.

13:7 "Canaanite and Perizzite"—10:18; 15:20; 34:30.

13:8 "Strife"—Prov 15:18; 20:3; Matt 5:40; Rom 12:18; 1 Cor 6:7. Quarreling over land and property is senseless—Ps 49:10-12; Luke 12:13-21.

13:9 The whole land was given to Abram, but he was willing to give the best portion to Lot in order to avoid strife. He is an example to us of unselfishness. See also 26:19-22.

13:10-11 Lot was greedy and selfish in this decision. He got what he wanted but it cost him dearly in the end, as can be seen in chapter 19. This choice brought Lot close to the wicked cities that God would later destroy (vs 12,13). God will surely punish greed and selfishness (Col 3:5-6; 1 Tim 6:6-10; Heb 13:5). See the way of happiness and blessing in the words of Jesus in Matt 10:38-39; Luke 14:33.

13:13 "Against"—compare Ps 51:4. All sin is against God.

13:14-17 God repeated this promise of Canaan many times (12:7; 15:18; 17:8). Notice that the gift of Canaan was forever (v 15).

13:18 "Hebron"—a town about 35 kilometers south of Jerusalem.

14:1 "Shinar"—Babylonia (11:2).

"Elam"—10:22. Elam was an area in what is now called Iran.

on Bera king of Sodom, and on Birsha king of Gomorrah, Shinab king of Admah, and Shemeber king of Zeboiim, and the king of Bela, which is Zoar. ³All these made an alliance together in the vale of Siddim, which is the salt sea. ⁴For twelve years they served Chedorlaomer, and in the thirteenth year they rebelled.

⁵And in the fourteenth year Chedorlaomer, and the kings who were with him, came and attacked the Rephaim in Ashteroth Karnaim, and the Zuzim in Ham, and the Emim in Shaveh Kiriathaim, ⁶and the Horites in their mount Seir as far as El Paran, which is near the wilderness. ⁷And they returned and came to En Mishpat, which is Kadesh, and attacked the whole country of the Amalekites, and also the Amorites who lived in Hazezon Tamar.

⁸And the king of Sodom, and the king of Gomorrah, and the king of Admah, and the king of Zeboiim, and the king of Bela (this is Zoar) went out and met them in battle in the vale of Siddim, that is, they met ⁹Chedorlaomer the king of Elam, Tidal king of nations, Amraphel king of Shinar, and Arioch king of Ellasar, four kings fighting with five. ¹⁰And the vale of Siddim was full of tar pits, and the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah fled, and fell there. And those who remained fled to the mountain. ¹¹And they took all the goods of Sodom and Gomorrah, and all their food, and went their way. ¹²And

they took Abram's brother's son Lot, who lived in Sodom, and his goods, and left.

¹³And one who had escaped came and told Abram the Hebrew, for he lived among the oak trees of Mamre the Amorite, the brother of Eshcol, and brother of Aner. These men were allies of Abram. ¹⁴And when Abram heard that his brother had been taken captive, he armed his trained servants, born in his own house, three hundred and eighteen in number, and pursued them as far as Dan. ¹⁵And he divided his forces against them, he and his servants, at night, and attacked them, and pursued them as far as Hobah, which is to the north of Damascus. ¹⁶And he brought back all the goods, and brought back also his brother Lot and his goods, and also the women and the people.

¹⁷And after his return from the slaughter of Chedorlaomer and of the kings who had been with him, the king of Sodom went out to meet him at the valley of Shaveh, which is the king's dale.

¹⁸And Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine. He was the priest of the Most High God. ¹⁹And he blessed him, saying, "Blessed be Abram by the Most High God, possessor of heaven and earth, ²⁰and blessed be the Most High God Who has delivered your enemies into your hand". And Abram gave him a tenth of everything.

²¹And the king of Sodom said to Abram, "Give me the people, and take the goods

14:3 "Salt Sea"— the Dead Sea. Sodom and Gomorrah were on the plain near it.

14:7 "Kadesh"— Kadesh Barnea on the southern border of Canaan.

"Amalekites"— note at Ex 17:8.

"Amorites"— 10:16; 15:16.

14:12 At first Lot was only near Sodom (13:12). Now he was in it and so in great danger.

14:13 This is the first use of the word "Hebrew" in the Bible. See 11:16.

14:14-16 In all this Abraham revealed great courage, faith in God and skill in military matters. He led 318 men against four kings and their combined armies and was able to rescue Lot and the plunder. Compare Gideon's victory with 300 men in Judges chapter 7, and see 1 Sam 14:6.

14:14 "Brother"— Lot was Abraham's nephew, not his literal brother. The Hebrew word here translated brother has a wider range of meaning than the English word. It may indicate a variety of relationships.

14:18 "Melchizedek"— we know very little of this person. He is mentioned only once more in the Old Testament (Ps 110:4). But he has great importance

as a type and forerunner of Christ as High Priest, and he is discussed at some length in the letter to the Hebrews. See notes on Hebrews chapter 7. To Abraham he gave bread and wine. Compare Matt 26:26-29.

"Salem"— this almost certainly refers to Jerusalem (Ps 76:2). The word means peace and well-being.

"Priest"— note at Ex 28:1.

"Most High God"— in Hebrew "El Elyon". The name is used 35 times in the Hebrew Bible, mostly in Psalms (21 times). El Elyon is far above all others called God or Lord (Ps 97:9), transcendent over the universe. Heaven and earth are His possessions; that is, He is the eternal Creator. The first mention of this name is associated with a priest, thus suggesting that El Elyon can be approached only through sacrifice.

14:20 "Blessed be"— the Hebrew may also be translated "Praise be to".

"Abram"— literally, "he".

"Tenth"— or "a tithe". This is the first mention of a tithe in the Bible. Abraham gave to Melchizedek a tenth, thus showing how great Melchizedek

for yourself”.

²²And Abram said to the king of Sodom, “I have raised my hand to the LORD, the Most High God, the possessor of heaven and earth, ²³swearing that I will not take anything that is yours, from a thread to a shoelace, so that you would not say, ‘I have made Abram rich’, ²⁴except for that which the young men have eaten, and the share of the men who went with me, Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre. Let them take their share”.

15 After these things the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision, saying, “Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, and your exceedingly great reward”.

²And Abram said, “Lord God, what will you give me, while I go childless? And while

was (Heb 7:4-7). That is, as God’s appointed priest he was in a higher position than Abraham. On “tithe” see 28:22; Lev 27:30; Num 18:21; Deut 12:6; 14:22; 2 Chron 31:5; Mal 3:8-12.

14:22-24 Abraham solemnly refused to accept anything from the ungodly – the opposite of Balaam (2 Pet 2:15), and many in our own day who love money and possessions regardless of where they come from or how they might get them.

15:1 “*Vision*”– the first appearance of this word which is used in the Bible about 100 times. In Hebrew the word comes from a verb which means “to see” or “to gaze at”. God often revealed things to His prophets by means of visions. Sometimes they came in dreams, sometimes when the prophet was awake or in a trance-like state. They sometimes saw symbolic forms and shapes and heard God speaking to them revealing His word and will.

“*Do not be afraid*”– compare 21:17; 26:24; Ex 14:13; Isa 35:4; 41:10; 43:5; Matt 14:27; Heb 13:6.

“*Shield*”– Ps 3:3; 28:7. God Himself was Abraham’s shield. Anyone who tried to injure Abraham had first to get through God. This is true of all God’s people. Compare Deut 33:29; Job 1:10-11; 2:6; Ps 115:9-11.

“*Reward*”– God Himself was also Abraham’s reward – his great treasure. If our treasure is in God, is God, there is no danger of anyone breaking in and stealing it (Matt 6:19-21). And what a treasure this is! See Num 18:20; Deut 10:9; Ps 73:26; Eph 1:3; 2:7; 3:8; 1 Pet 1:4.

15:2 “*Lord God*”– the Hebrew words are Adonai Jehovah, and if both words were translated as in the rest of the KJV, would be “Lord LORD” (the word for God is not in the Hebrew here). The expression means Lord Jehovah. This name is used more than 400 times in the Hebrew Old Testament. Adonai means lord, master, ruler.

the manager of my household is this Eliezer of Damascus?” ³And Abram said, “See, you have not given me any offspring, and, see, someone born in my house is my heir”.

⁴And now the word of the LORD came to him, saying, “This one will not be your heir, but the one who will come forth from your own body will be your heir”. ⁵And he brought him outside and said, “Look now toward the heavens and count the stars, if you are able to count them”. And he said to him, “So will your offspring be”.

⁶And he believed in the LORD, and He counted it to him for righteousness.

⁷And he said to him, “I am the LORD who brought you from Ur of the Chaldees, to give you this land to inherit it”.

⁸And he said, “Lord God, how can I know

Adonai is Lord of the whole earth (Josh 3:11). He is the Lord of lords (Deut 10:17). In Greek the word is Kurios, the title given to the Lord Jesus Christ in the New Testament. See note at Luke 2:11. Abraham is acknowledging Jehovah as his master, and the Lord of everything – one well able to give him a son.

15:3 If Abraham had no child all he could do was leave his property to someone else. Evidently he had been considering Eliezer for this.

15:4-5 God made this promise of an heir when Abraham’s wife Sarai was barren (11:30), and in any case past the age of childbearing (Heb 11:11). It was not humanly possible for them to have children. But God is able to make anything happen and human impossibilities are as nothing to Him (18:14; Jer 32:17,27; Luke 1:37).

15:6 This is one of the key verses of the Bible. It is repeated in three books of the New Testament (Rom 4:3,9,22; Gal 3:6; Jam 2:23). God did not count Abraham righteous because of his piety or obedience to God’s call, but because of his faith. In himself Abraham was a sinner, as we all are. Men cannot change themselves into holy people, cannot create for themselves a righteous nature, cannot stand before God by their good works (Isa 64:6; Jer 13:23; Rom 3:10-12). But if we trust God and believe God’s promises, God counts our faith as righteousness (Rom 3:22; 5:1; 10:10; Phil 3:9; Heb 11:7). He puts on us His own perfect righteousness – Isa 61:10; 1 Cor 1:30; 2 Cor 5:21. See also Gen 3:21. In this way God makes us fit for His presence, even as He did Abraham.

15:7 See 11:31; 12:1.

15:8 Abraham believed God would give him a son, but he longed for a sign from God to encourage his faith concerning Canaan. God did not rebuke him for that (see also Jud 6:17,36-40; 2 Kings 20:8-11; Isa 7:11,14; 37:30; Luke 1:18).

that I will inherit it?"

⁹And he said to him, "Bring to me a heifer three years old, a female goat three years old, a ram three years old, a dove, and a young pigeon". ¹⁰And he took all these to him, and cut them in half and laid each piece opposite the other, but he did not cut the birds in half. ¹¹And when birds of prey came down on the carcasses, Abram drove them away.

¹²And when the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell on Abram, and suddenly a horror of great darkness fell on him. ¹³And

he said to Abram, "Know for certain that your offspring will be strangers in a land that is not theirs, and will serve those people. And they will afflict them for four hundred years. ¹⁴And also I will judge that nation whom they will serve. And afterward they will come out with great possessions. ¹⁵And you will go to your fathers in peace. You will be buried in a good old age. ¹⁶But in the fourth generation they will come here again, for the wickedness of the Amorites is not yet full".

15:9 Lev 1:2,10,14-17; Num 19:2.

15:12 What follows came to Abraham in a dream. This is one way God revealed truth to people in Bible times. See 20:3; 28:12; 31:24; 37:5; 40:5. Notes at Num 12:6; Deut 13:1.

15:13 Ex 1:11,14; 2:23; Deut 5:15.

15:14 Ex 3:19-22; 6:6; 7:4; 9:13-16; 12:32-38.

15:15 See 25:7-8.

"Go...in peace"—a way of indicating his death.

15:16 "Fourth generation"—v 13 says 400 years. People in Abraham's day lived longer than they do now, so a generation then comprised more years than a generation now. Abraham lived to the age of 175, Isaac to 180, Jacob to 147, Joseph to 110.

"Amorites"—10:15-16; 14:7. They were inhabitants of Canaan before Abraham arrived there.

"Not yet full"—compare 6:3,5-7; Lev 18:24-25. God punishes evil people only when the time is ripe, and He waits patiently for them to repent and turn to Him if they will. If they do not, according to the Bible, He may send another people to destroy them.

Note on God and human calamities

Concerning destructive wars, genocides, or natural disasters which have occurred in the world there are only a small number of possible views which people can hold.

1. There is no God and all such things are a result of natural catastrophes or man's inhumanity to man. This would be a common view of those who do not believe that the Bible is the Word of God.

2. There is a God but He has little or nothing to do with such events, but stands aside and does not hinder the forces of nature and lets men behave as they will.

3. There is a God who is the active sovereign ruler of the world, and He is the one who is responsible for the above things, and He is unjust in permitting these things to happen or causing them to happen. More people than we may estimate privately (and perhaps subconsciously) hold this view, though many of them would not want to state openly that God is unjust.

4. God is the ruler of the world but for reasons known only to Himself justly permits such things

to happen without actively causing them; He allows men to do to one another more or less as they will.

5. God, as the sovereign ruler of the world, uses men and nations and nature to bring such things about and always works in absolute justice to accomplish His plan for the world.

Those of us who believe that God exists and know that such things have occurred in the world, and do occur, must reach our own conclusions about God's relationship to them. But we should try to learn what He wants to teach us, and beware of charging God with any kind of indifference, weakness or injustice. Does not the Creator of men care what happens to them? Does not the One who made the universe have sufficient wisdom to know how to rule in the affairs of men? Is He not strong enough to prevent what He wants to prevent and bring about what He wishes to bring about? We would be foolish indeed to ignore what the Bible says about all this – the more so if we realize that both Jesus Christ and His apostles all upheld the divine inspiration and authority of the Bible.

In God's Word, the Bible, we see that God Himself sent the flood which destroyed almost the entire human race. We see that He Himself sent the angel of death into Egypt in Moses' day to destroy all the firstborn of the Egyptians. Later we see that He Himself sent Israel into the land of Canaan to exterminate its wicked inhabitants. We see that He gave orders to King Saul to completely obliterate the Amalekites. We see that in the Gospels Jesus Himself spoke of the destruction of Jerusalem by its enemies as a result of their sin. Other examples can be given. And if God caused such things to happen, surely it is wisdom on our part to attribute to Him a good reason for His actions, though we may not understand what the reason is. It is madness to accuse Him of injustice or of acting contrary to goodness and wisdom. Are we superior to God that we can judge Him and call His actions into question? Are we more just than He? Do we see more clearly than He what should be done among the peoples of the world? See also the note on Ps 47:2; Rom 9.

¹⁷And it came about that when the sun went down and it was dark, *there* appeared a smoking furnace and a flaming torch that passed between those pieces. ¹⁸In the same day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, "To your offspring I have given this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the river Euphrates, *the land of* ¹⁹the Kenites, the Kenizzites, the Kadmonites, ²⁰the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Rephaim, ²¹the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Gergashites, and the Jebusites".

16 Now Sarai, Abram's wife, had borne him no *children*, and she had a maidservant, an Egyptian, whose name was Hagar. ²And Sarai said to Abram, "Now look, the LORD has kept me from bearing *children*. Please, go in to my maidservant. It may be that I can obtain children through her". And Abram listened to Sarai's voice.

³And Sarai, Abram's wife, took Hagar, her Egyptian maidservant, after Abram had lived ten years in the land of Canaan, and gave her to her husband Abram to be his wife. ⁴And he went in to Hagar, and she conceived. And when she saw that she

had conceived, her mistress was despised in her eyes.

⁵And Sarai said to Abram, "The wrong I *suffer* be on you. I gave my maidservant into your arms, and when she saw that she had conceived, I was despised in her eyes. The LORD judge between me and you".

⁶But Abram said to Sarai, "Look, your maidservant is in your hand. Do whatever you please to her". And when Sarai dealt harshly with her, she ran away from her presence.

⁷And the angel of the LORD found her by a spring of water in the desert, by the spring on the way to Shur.

⁸And he said, "Hagar, Sarai's maidservant, from where have you come? And where are you going?" And she said, "I'm running away from the presence of my mistress Sarai".

⁹And the angel of the LORD said to her, "Return to your mistress, and submit yourself to her authority". ¹⁰And the angel of the LORD said to her, "I will increase the number of your offspring exceedingly, so that they will be too many to count".

¹¹And the angel of the LORD said to her, "See, you *are* with child. You will give birth

15:17 In ancient times when making a solemn covenant sometimes an animal was killed and divided into two parts. Then the covenant makers passed between the parts. See Jer 34:18-19. Here God Himself, symbolized by fire, walked between the parts of the slain animals. On fire as a symbol of God see Ex 3:2.

"Furnace"— or "fire pot". "Flaming torch" is closer to the Hebrew than "burning lamp".

15:18-21 God now makes a solemn covenant to give the land of Canaan to Abram's descendants (13:14-17; 17:1-8; 22:17; 26:4; 28:13-15). The land was occupied by numerous and strong peoples, but God fulfilled His promise as He always does. See Josh 21:43-45; 1 Kings 4:20-21.

16:1-4 God had promised Abram that an heir would be born to him (15:4). Now Abram makes the mistake of trying to fulfill God's promise in his own way, instead of waiting for God to do so in His way. He listens to the voice of his wife instead of waiting for God's voice. The results were sad indeed for Abram and Sarai, and deeply affected the whole history of Western Asia. The offspring of Abram and Hagar was Ishmael, the progenitor of twelve Arab tribes (16:11; 17:20; 25:12-18). The descendants of Ishmael and Isaac (21:1-3) have often been opposed to each other even to this day.

16:7 Angels are mentioned about 300 times in

the Bible. They are spirit beings usually unseen by men. But they may appear in the form of men from time to time. Both the Hebrew and Greek words for angel means "messenger". Angels were created by God for His service. Some important references to them are: 28:12; Job 1:6; 38:7; Ps 78:49; 91:11; 103:20; Dan 6:22; Matt 1:20; 13:39,41; 16:27; 22:30; 25:41; 26:53; John 1:51; Acts 7:53; 8:26; 12:7-11; 2 Cor 11:14; Col 2:18; Heb 1:6-7; 1 Pet 1:12; 2 Pet 2:4; Rev 1:1; 22:8-9.

There are innumerable angels (Rev 5:11), but the angel in this verse is a very special one. His name is "the angel of the LORD (Jehovah)". He appears many times in the Old Testament and speaks as if He were God Himself (31:11-13; Ex 3:2-6), and He has divine attributes (16:10; 48:16). He is identified as the LORD (Jehovah – Jud 2:1-3; 6:12,14,16,23). His name is "wonderful" (Jud 13:18; compare Isa 9:6). He appeared several times in the form of a man (Jud 13:3,6,10,11,13). For these reasons it seems certain that this angel is none other than the Son of God, Jesus Christ, coming to help and bless men before His birth of a virgin many centuries later.

16:10 This is language only God can use – 17:1-2,19,20.

16:11 Ishmael means "God hears".

to a son, and shall call his name Ishmael, because the Lord has heard of your misery. ¹²And he will be a wild man. His hand *will be* against every man, and every man's hand *will be* against him. And he will live in the presence of all his brothers”.

¹³And she called the name of the LORD who spoke to her, “You *are the* God who sees me”, for she said, “Here have I also seen him who sees me?” ¹⁴Therefore the well was called Beer Lahai Roi. To this day, *it is* between Kadesh and Bered.

¹⁵And Hagar bore Abram a son. And Abram called his son's name, whom Hagar bore, Ishmael. ¹⁶And Abram was eighty-six years old when Hagar bore Ishmael to Abram.

17 And when Abram was ninety-nine years old, the LORD appeared to Abram, and said to him, “I *am* God Almighty. Walk in my presence and be blameless. ²And I will make my covenant between me and you, and will increase your numbers exceedingly”.

³And Abram prostrated himself, and God talked with him, saying, ⁴“As for me, now

“*Misery*”— see how concerned the great God of the universe was with the sorrows of a servant girl. Compare Ex 22:26-27; Ps 103:13-14; Matt 8:2-3; 9:36; Luke 22:50-51. This should give us confidence that He cares for us too and will hear us when we call. See Ps 65:2.

16:13 “*Sees me*”— Job 24:23; 31:4; 34:21; Ps 139:1-6; Prov 5:21; 15:3; 2 Chron 16:9; Heb 4:13.

16:14 This name means “The well of the Living One Who sees me”.

17:1 “*Appeared*”— 12:7.

“*God Almighty*”— the Hebrew words for this are El Shaddai. The name is used 48 times in the Old Testament, mostly in Genesis (6) and Job (31). El Shaddai is the all-sufficient one who can keep His promises and do anything for His people He decides to do (18:14; Jer 32:17,27; Matt 19:26; Rom 4:21).

“*Blameless*”— the Hebrew word here (translated “perfect” in the KJV) means “complete”, “whole”, “sound”, “wholesome”, “innocent”, “having integrity”, “blameless”, or “perfect”. this is what God wants all His believers to be – 6:9; Deut 18:13; Job 1:1; Ps 15:1-2; 19:13; Prov 2:7; 1 Cor 1:8; Phil 2:15; 1 Thess 3:13; 5:23; 2 Pet 3:14. A blameless life must be a walk in God's presence and with His strength, and always looking to Him and for Him.

17:2 See 12:2-3; 13:14-16; 15:4-5,18.

17:4 “*Many nations*”— all the descendants of Ishmael, Isaac, and Abraham's sons by Keturah

this is my covenant with you: you will be a father of many nations. ⁵And your name will no longer be called Abram, but your name will be Abraham, for I have made you a father of many nations. ⁶And I will make you exceedingly fruitful, and I will make nations of you, and kings will come from you. ⁷And I will establish my covenant between me and you and your offspring after you in their generations as an everlasting covenant, to be your God and *the God* of your descendants after you. ⁸And I will give to you, and to your descendants after you, the land where you are a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession. And I will be their God”.

⁹And God said to Abraham, “Therefore you shall keep my covenant, you and your descendants after you in their generations. ¹⁰This *is* my covenant, which you shall keep, between me and you and your descendants after you: Every male among you must be circumcised. ¹¹And you shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin. And it will be a sign of the covenant between me and you. ¹²And among you he who is eight days old shall be circumcised, every male in your generations,

(Gen 16:10; 17:19; 25:1-4).

17:5 Abram means “exalted father”. Abraham means “father of a multitude”.

17:6 “*Kings*”— a great many kings came from Abraham – rulers of the nation of Israel and other peoples. Also the King of kings, the Lord Jesus, in His human nature, is descended from Abraham.

17:7 “*To be your God*”— this was the most important of the promises of this covenant – far greater than the promise of the land of Canaan. This promise is repeated under the new covenant – Jer 31:31-33; 2 Cor 6:16. It is also one of the last and best things seen in the Bible – Rev 21:3. If the true and living God is our God then we have the highest possible good and all we can ever need for time or eternity.

17:9-14 Circumcision was to signify something spiritual – Deut 10:16; 30:6; Jer 4:4; 9:25-26; Col 2:11. It spoke of faith in God's word, and a righteousness that comes by faith (Rom 4:11). It was an agreement to be the people of God and listen to His voice. The mere outward ceremony meant nothing if there was not faith and a desire to please and serve God (Rom 2:28-29). But if the rite was not practiced, if a person had no faith, no obedience to God's covenant, he was to be cut off from the people. Men had responsibility under the covenant God made with Abraham. It was to believe God and act accordingly.

17:10 17:15 Sarah means “princess”.

he who is born in the house, or bought with money from any foreigner, who is not of your offspring. ¹³He who is born in your house, and he who is bought with your money, must be circumcised. And my covenant will be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant. ¹⁴As for the uncircumcised male, the flesh of whose foreskin is not circumcised, that soul shall be cut off from his people. He has broken my covenant”.

¹⁵And God said to Abraham, “As for your wife Sarai, you shall not call her name Sarai, but her name *will be* Sarah. ¹⁶And I will bless her, and give you a son by her also. Yes, I will bless her, and she will be a *mother of nations*. Kings of people will come from her”.

¹⁷Then Abraham prostrated himself and laughed and said in his heart, “Will a *child* be born to him who is a hundred years old? And will Sarah, who is ninety years old, bear a *child*?” ¹⁸And Abraham said to God, “O that Ishmael might live in your presence!”

¹⁹And God said, “Your wife Sarah will certainly bear you a son, and you shall call his name Isaac. And I will establish my covenant with him as an everlasting covenant, *and* with his offspring after him. ²⁰And as for Ishmael, I have heard you. Now I have blessed him and will make him fruitful, and will increase *his numbers* exceedingly. He will become the father of twelve princes, and I will make him a great nation. ²¹But my covenant I will establish with Isaac, whom Sarah will bear to you by this same time next year”. ²²And he finished talking with him, and God went up from Abraham.

²³And Abraham took his son Ishmael, and all who had been born in his house, and all who had been bought with his money, every male among the persons of Abraham’s

household, and that very day circumcised the flesh of their foreskin, as God had told him. ²⁴And Abraham was ninety-nine years old when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin. ²⁵And his son Ishmael was thirteen years old when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin. ²⁶Abraham and his son Ishmael were circumcised on the same day. ²⁷And all the men of his household, born in the house and bought with money from foreigners, were circumcised with him.

18 And the LORD appeared to him at the oak trees of Mamre as he was sitting in the tent door in the heat of the day. ²And he raised his eyes and looked and three men appeared, standing near him. And when he saw *them*, he ran from the tent door to meet them, and bowed himself toward the ground, ³and said, “My Lord, if now I have found favour in your sight, please do not pass your servant by. ⁴Please let a little water be brought, and wash your feet and rest yourselves under the tree. ⁵And I will bring a piece of bread. Refresh yourselves. After that you can go on. That is why you have come to your servant”. And they said, “Do as you have said”.

⁶And Abraham hurried into the tent to Sarah and said, “Quick! Get ready three measures of fine flour, knead it, and make bread on the hearth”.

⁷And Abraham ran to the herd and brought a choice tender calf and gave *it* to a young man who hurried to prepare it. ⁸And he took butter and milk, and the calf which he had prepared, and set *them* before them. And he stood by them under the tree, and they ate.

⁹And they said to him, “Where *is* your wife Sarah?” And he said, “There, in the tent”.

¹⁰And he said, “I will certainly return to

17:16 For the first time God promises that Sarah shall bear a son.

17:17-18 The faith of Abraham, the man of faith, and the father of all who believe, temporarily stumbles. Perhaps he “believed not for joy” (Luke 24:40-41). In all of God’s believers there is a mixture of faith and unbelief, and we all have reason enough to cry out as the man in Mark 9:24 did.

17:19-21 God repeats the promise. Isaac means “he laughs”. God says He will establish the covenant with him, not with Ishmael (but Ishmael also was to receive God’s blessing because he was a son of Abraham.) Now Abraham fully believed the promise concerning Isaac. See Rom 4:17-24.

17:23 Abraham immediately obeyed. See also 22:1-3. This is a mark of a man of God. Many people put obedience to God’s Word off to another time, and then never get around to it (Acts 24:25; 2 Cor 6:2; Heb 3:15; John 2:5).

18:1-2 Here is an instance of God appearing in the form of man. See 12:7; 16:7. The other two that appeared to Abraham were angels (vs 16,22; 19:1).

18:6 “Bread”— the KJV has “cakes”, which is misleading to readers now. The meaning of the Hebrew is flat round bread like chapathis or parathas.

18:8 Abraham’s preparation of the meal took some time. The Lord and His angels waited patiently. See Jud 6:18.

you, according to the time of life, and then your wife Sarah will have a son". And Sarah heard it *standing* in the tent door, which was behind him.

¹¹Now Abraham and Sarah were old and well advanced in age, *and* it had ceased to be with Sarah according to the way of women. ¹²Therefore Sarah laughed to herself, saying, "After I have become old will I have pleasure, my lord also being old?"

¹³And the LORD said to Abraham, "Why did Sarah laugh, saying, 'Will I, who am old, indeed bear a *child*?' ¹⁴Is anything too hard for the LORD? At the time appointed I will return to you, according to the time of life, and Sarah will have a son".

¹⁵Then Sarah denied *it*, saying, "I did not laugh", for she was afraid. And he said, "No, but you did laugh". ¹⁶And the men got up from there and looked toward Sodom. And Abraham went with them to take them on the way. ¹⁷And the LORD said, "Shall I hide from Abraham what I am going to do, ¹⁸seeing that Abraham will certainly become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth will be blessed in him? ¹⁹For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and so they will keep the way of the LORD,

practicing righteousness and justice, so that the LORD may bring to Abraham that which he has told him".

²⁰And the LORD said, "Because the outcry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grievous, ²¹I will now go down and see whether they have done altogether according to its outcry, which has reached me; and if not, I will know". ²²And the men turned their faces from there, and went toward Sodom, but Abraham was still standing before the LORD. ²³And Abraham drew near and said, "Will you destroy the righteous also with the wicked? ²⁴Perhaps there are fifty righteous *people* in the city. Will you really destroy *it* and not spare the place for the fifty righteous who are there? ²⁵Far be it from you to act in this way, to kill the righteous with the wicked. That the righteous should be as the wicked – be it far from you! Will not the Judge of all the earth do right?"

²⁶And the LORD said, "If I find at Sodom fifty righteous in the city, then I will spare the whole place for their sakes".

²⁷And Abraham answered and said, "Please, here am I, who *am only* dust and ashes, undertaking to speak to the Lord, ²⁸perhaps the fifty righteous will lack five.

18:12 See 17:17. Though Sarah laughed here, later she must also have believed the promise – Heb 11:11-12.

"*Lord*" – the Hebrew also means "husband".

18:14 "*Is anything too hard for the LORD*" – Jer 32:17,27; Matt 19:25-26; Luke 1:37.

18:15 Sarah shows her sinful nature by lying to God. See 12:13. Very often the wrong kind of fear causes even good people to sin. The healthy fear of God keeps them from it (20:11; Ex 20:20). So God tells His people not to fear what men in general fear (15:1), but to fear Him – Deut 10:20; Matt 10:28; Heb 12:28.

18:16 "*Sodom*" – 13:12-13.

18:17 Ps 25:14; Prov 3:32; Amos 3:7; John 7:17; Isa 41:8.

18:18 See 12:3; 22:18; Acts 3:25; Gal 3:8.

18:19 "*Children*" – Deut 4:9; 6:6-7; 11:9; Ps 78:4; Prov 22:6; Eph 6:4; 2 Tim 3:15. See here Abraham's responsibility to behave in such a way that God could fulfill His promises to him.

18:21 "*I will know*" – didn't the Lord, who is omniscient, know what the exact state of Sodom was? Why did He need to go down and see? He did not need to. He can know everything without going anywhere – John 21:17; Heb 4:13 (so no one should ever think he can hide anything from God). But can He not also in

His perfect liberty, if He wishes, choose not to know something – such as all the details of the vileness of the people of Sodom? And can He not choose to forget what He wants to forget (compare Isa 43:5; Jer 31:34; Heb 10:17)? Does anyone know enough about the nature of God to be able to say dogmatically what He can and cannot do in such matters as this? On the sin of Sodom see Ezek 16:49-50.

18:22-23 Abraham understood God's intention to destroy Sodom. His nephew Lot was living there and Abraham was afraid that Lot would be destroyed in the destruction of Sodom. And he probably felt compassion for the people of Sodom, wicked though they were. So he begins to intercede for the city.

18:24 "*Spare*" – the Hebrew word here may also mean "forgive" (also v 26).

18:25 "*Judge*" – Ps 9:7-8; 58:11; 94:2; 96:13; Eccl 12:14; Acts 17:30-31; Rom 2:16; 2 Cor 5:10; Rev 20:11-15.

"*Do right*" – Deut 32:4; 2 Chron 19:7; Job 34:10,12; 37:23; Ps 89:14; 97:2; Jer 9:24.

18:27 "*Dust and ashes*" – 3:19. Abraham takes his rightful place as a frail, mortal creature before the great Creator and Lord of the universe. There is no other proper way for men to pray to the one true God.

Will you destroy the whole city for *lack of five?*"

And he said, "If I find there forty-five, I will not destroy *it*".

²⁹And he spoke to him once again and said, "Perhaps there will be forty found there".

And he said, "For the sake of forty, I will not do *it*".

³⁰And he said to him, "Oh, may the Lord not be angry, and I will speak: perhaps thirty will be found there".

And he said, "I will not do *it*, if I find thirty there".

³¹And he said, "Please, here am I undertaking to speak to the Lord: Perhaps twenty will be found there".

And he said, "For the sake of twenty, I will not destroy *it*".

³²And he said, "Oh, may the Lord not be angry, and I will speak just once more: perhaps ten will be found there".

And he said, "For the sake of ten, I will not destroy *it*".

³³And the LORD went his way when he had finished conversing with Abraham, and Abraham went back to his place.

19 And two angels came to Sodom in the evening, and Lot was sitting at the gate of Sodom. Seeing *them* Lot got up to meet them, and he bowed with his face toward the ground, ²and he said, "Please now, my lords, turn aside into your servant's house, and spend the night, and wash your

feet. Then you may rise up early and go on your way". And they said, "No, but we will spend the night in the street".

³And he urged them so strongly that they turned aside to him and went into his house. And he made a feast for them, and baked unleavened bread, and they ate. ⁴But before they lay down, the men of the city, the men of Sodom, both old and young, all the people from every quarter, surrounded the house, ⁵and they called out to Lot and said to him, "Where are the men who came in to you tonight? Bring them out to us, so that we may know them".

⁶And Lot went out the door to them and shut the door after him, ⁷and said, "Please, brethren, do not act so wickedly. ⁸Now look, I have two daughters who have not known a man. Please let me bring them out to you, and you do to them as you see fit. But do nothing to these men, because they have come under the shadow of my roof".

⁹And they said, "Stand back". And they said again, "This one came in to *town* to stay a while, and he has to be a judge! Now we will we treat you worse than them". And they crowded in on the man Lot, and came near to break in the door.

¹⁰But the men *inside* put out their hand and pulled Lot into the house to them and shut the door. ¹¹And they struck the men who were at the door of the house, both small and great, with blindness, so that they wearied themselves to find the door.

18:30 "*Angry*"— God will not be angry when men humbly pray and intercede for others. For the things which really make God angry see Num 25:3.

18:32 Abraham stopped at ten, perhaps thinking that Lot would have been able to lead his family and a few others at least into the paths of righteousness. Actually in the whole city of Sodom there was only one righteous person. That was Lot (2 Pet 2:6-8). And even he needed the prayers of Abraham for his rescue (19:29). Prayer is a very positive and mysterious and powerful force in God's dealings with men (20:17-18; Ex 17:11; 32:11-14; Num 14:19-20; 16:46-48; Josh 10:12-14; Job 42:10; Ps 18:6-10; 65:2; Prov 15:8,29; Isa 38:1-6; Jer 33:3; Dan 2:17-19; 9:3,21-23; 10:2,12-14; Matt 6:9-13; Mark 11:24; Luke 11:9-10; 18:1-8; Acts 1:14; 2:1-4; 4:24,31; 12:5-10; Jam 5:16-18; Rev 8:3-5).

19:1 "*Angels*"— these angels also appeared as men – 18:1-2,22. Sodom was notorious as the most wicked city of the ancient world and was about to be destroyed as an example of God's wrath and

judgment on sin (2 Pet 2:6; Jude 7; Deut 29:23; 32:32; Ezek 16:49-50). Notes at 6:7; Lev 18:24.

"*Gate*"— 34:20.

19:2 Their preference to spend the night outdoors does not speak well of Lot's home.

19:5 "*Know them*"— means to have sexual relations with them. See note at Gen 4:1. In the Bible lying with a man as with a woman is seen as a terrible sin. In the law He gave God says it is worthy of death (Lev 18:22; 20:13). The New Testament also speaks strongly against it (Rom 1:26-27; 1 Cor 6:9; 1 Tim 1:10; Jude 7). The men of Sodom wished to use force to satisfy their lust, piling sin on sin. **19:8** According to the rules of hospitality in those times guests in a home had to be protected by their host. Still it was surely an act of desperation for Lot to basely offer his defenseless daughters to these vile men.

19:9 Lot, though he was a righteous man, had no influence whatever over the people of Sodom.

19:11 God has His own ways of protecting His people, and it does not involve any acts of desperation such as appear in v 8.

¹²And the men said to Lot, “Have you here anyone else? Sons-in-law and your sons and your daughters, and whoever you have in the city, bring *them* out of this place, ¹³for we are going to destroy this place, because their outcry has become great in the presence of the LORD, and the LORD has sent us to destroy it”.

¹⁴And Lot went out and spoke to his sons-in-law, who had married his daughters, and said, “Up! get out of this place, for the Lord is going to destroy this city”. But to his sons-in-law he seemed like someone who was joking.

¹⁵And when the morning dawned the angels hurried Lot, saying, “Up! Take your wife and your two daughters who are here so that you will not be destroyed in *the punishment for the wickedness of the city*”.

¹⁶And when he hesitated, the men took hold of his hand, of the hand of his wife, and of the hand of his two daughters, for the LORD was merciful to him. And they brought him out and set him outside the city. ¹⁷And this took place when they had brought them out: one *of them* said, “Escape for your life! Do not look behind you, and do not stay anywhere on the plain. Escape to the mountain, so you will not be destroyed!”

¹⁸And Lot said to them, “No, please, my Lord! ¹⁹Now look, your servant has found favour in your sight, and you have magnified your mercy, which you have shown me in saving my life, but I cannot escape to the

mountain, or some evil may overtake me and I will die. ²⁰Now see, that town is near to flee to, and it is a little one. Please let me escape there (*is it not a little one?*), and my soul will live”.

²¹And he said to him, “See, I have accepted you for this thing also, so that I will not overthrow this town of which you have spoken. ²²Hurry! Escape there, for I cannot do any thing until you have gone there”. Therefore the name of the town was called Zoar.

²³The sun had risen over the earth when Lot went into Zoar. ²⁴Then the LORD rained sulfur and fire on Sodom and on Gomorrah out of the sky from the LORD. ²⁵And he overthrew those cities and the whole plain and all the inhabitants of the cities, and that which grew in the ground. ²⁶But his wife, from behind him, looked back and she became a pillar of salt.

²⁷And Abraham got up early in the morning and went to the place where he had stood before the LORD, ²⁸and he looked toward Sodom and Gomorrah, and toward all the land of the plain, and looking saw that the smoke of the country was going up like the smoke of a furnace.

²⁹And when God destroyed the cities of the plain, it came about that God remembered Abraham and so sent Lot out of the center of the overthrow, when he overthrew the cities in which Lot lived.

³⁰And Lot went up out of Zoar and lived

19:13 Justice and the good of the world demanded Sodom’s destruction.

19:14 Lot had no influence over his sons-in-law either.

“*Joking*” – sometimes those who bring the most solemn and true messages are regarded as fools or madmen – compare Acts 2:13; 17:18; 26:24.

19:16 It seems Lot still had not understood the seriousness of the situation and was reluctant to leave Sodom. His home and his wealth were there. In spite of his reluctance to leave, God was merciful to him. It was God’s mercy and not Lot’s goodness that was the reason for his deliverance. Compare Eph 2:4,8; 2 Pet 3:9.

19:17 “*Escape*” – God’s judgment was on the way. It called for immediate action. Compare Matt 3:7; Heb 6:18.

19:18-20 Lot would not leave the choice of the place for him in God’s hands. Still he wanted to make his own self-centered choice. Compare 13:10-11.

19:22 God was going to rescue Lot in answer to Abraham’s prayer (v 29) and could not destroy Sodom until Lot was out of it. So with Noah

(chapters 6,7); so with God’s people at the end of this age (Rev 14:14-16; 15:1). “Zoar” means small.

19:26 Lot had little or no influence over his wife. All she wanted was in Sodom. See Luke 17:32.

19:27 See 18:22.

19:29 Lot was rescued for Abraham’s sake and in answer to Abraham’s prayer.

19:30-38 Lot had no godly influence over his daughters either. And he was responsible for what happened there. This story of Lot is very sad, but very instructive. He was a man who believed God and was counted righteous (2 Pet 2:6-8). But he made a bad choice because of greed, and did not keep his distance from Sodom. He knew what Sodom was like and felt bad about the behavior of its people. But he chose to live there. And obviously he did not bring up his daughters in the instruction and fear of God. He is a picture of carnal believers who, though saved, will experience great loss – 1 Cor 3:1-15. Let us learn from God’s Word what the world is really like and how to live in it (1 John 2:16-17; 2 Cor 6:14-18), and what great loss we can suffer by selfishness and compromise.

in a mountain, and his two daughters went with him, for he was afraid to live in Zoar. And he lived in a cave, he and his two daughters. ³¹And the firstborn said to the younger, "Our father is old, and there is not a man on earth to come in to us according to the way of the whole earth. ³²Come, let us make our father drink wine, and we will lie down with him, so that we may bring to life offspring of our father".

³³And they made their father drink wine that night, and the first born went in and lay with her father. And he did not know when she lay down, or when she got up.

³⁴And it came about on the next day that the firstborn said to the younger, "Look, last night I lay with my father. Let us make him drink wine tonight also, and you go in and lie with him, so that we may bring to life offspring of our father". ³⁵And they made their father drink wine that night also. Then the younger got up and lay with him. And he did not know when she lay down, or when she got up.

³⁶In this way both the daughters of Lot were pregnant by their father. ³⁷And the firstborn gave birth to a son, and called his name Moab. He is the father of the Moabites of today. ³⁸As to the younger, she also gave birth to a son, and called his name Ben Ammi. He is the father of the children of Ammon of today.

19:36-38 The Moabites and Ammonites later became enemies of Israel. Such sin as the daughters of Lot committed with him, indeed all sin, can have far-reaching consequences.

19:38 "Ben-Ammi" means "son of my people".

20:1 Gerar was in the land of the Philistines toward the coast of the Mediterranean Sea.

20:2 Abraham repeats his former sin (12:13). An event like this shows that when Satan knows our weakness he will bring the same temptations again and again.

20:3 Once again God had to intervene to protect Sarah. This is the first use of the word "dream" in the Bible. But see 15:12.

20:6 "From sinning"— 1 Sam 25:26; Jude 24.

"Against me"— Ps 51:4.

20:7 "Prophet"— the word "prophet" in Hebrew does not mean an eloquent speaker or a learned man, though some of the prophets of the Bible were both. The Hebrew verb from

20 And Abraham journeyed from there toward the south country, and lived between Kadesh and Shur, and stayed for a while in Gerar. ²And Abraham said of Sarah his wife, "She is my sister", and Abimelech king of Gerar sent and took Sarah.

³But God came to Abimelech in a dream at night and said to him, "Now you are the same as dead, because of the woman whom you have taken, for she is a man's wife".

⁴But Abimelech had not come near her, and he said, "Lord, will you destroy righteous people? ⁵Did he not say to me, 'She is my sister?' And she also, she herself, said, 'He is my brother'. I have done this in the integrity of my heart and the innocence of my hands".

⁶And God said to him in the dream, "Yes, I know that you did this in the integrity of your heart, for I also kept you from sinning against me. For this reason I did not permit you to touch her. ⁷So now return the man's wife to him, for he is a prophet, and he will pray for you, and you will live. But if you do not return her, know for a certainty that you will die, you, and all who are yours".

⁸Therefore Abimelech rose early in the morning, and called all his servants, and told all these things in their hearing. And the men were very afraid. ⁹Then Abimelech called Abraham and said to him, "What have you done to us? In what have I offended you, that you have brought on me and on my kingdom a great sin? You have done things to me that ought not to be done".

which the word prophet comes means to announce, to proclaim, or to speak by some sort of inspiration. Certainly in general a prophet in the Bible was a person who spoke by inspiration, under the influence of some spirit. A true prophet was inspired by God's Spirit and spoke God's messages. A false prophet spoke by inspiration from some source other than God, and spoke lying messages. See also Num 11:25. For true prophets see Deut 18:18; 1 Sam 3:19-21; 1 Kings 17:1-2,8; Jer 1:4-10; Micah 1:1; 3:8. For false prophets see Deut 18:20-22; 1 Kings 18:19-29; Jer 14:14; 23:32; Ezek 13; Matt 24:11,24; Luke 6:26; 2 Pet 2:1; 1 John 4:1; Rev 16:13; 19:20. The whole Bible was given by God through His true prophets. Much of it has been fulfilled, some still awaits fulfillment.

20:9 It is a sad day when outsiders must rebuke the prophets and servants of God for their wrongdoing.

¹⁰And Abimelech said to Abraham, “What did you see that you have done this thing?”

¹¹And Abraham said, “Because I thought, ‘Surely the fear of God is not in this place, and they will kill me on account of my wife.’

¹²And yet *she* really is my sister. She is the daughter of my father, but not the daughter of my mother, and she became my wife. ¹³And when God caused me to wander from my father’s house, it came about that I said to her, ‘You shall show me this kindness: wherever we go, say of me, ‘He is my brother.’ ”

¹⁴And Abimelech took sheep, and oxen, and male servants, and female servants, and gave *them* to Abraham, and returned his wife Sarah to him. ¹⁵And Abimelech said, “Look, my land is before you. Live where it pleases you”.

¹⁶And he said to Sarah, “See, I have given your brother a thousand *pieces* of silver. See, it is to cover the *offense* against you in the eyes of all who are with you; to everyone this is your vindication”.

¹⁷So Abraham prayed to God, and God healed Abimelech, his wife, and his female servants, and they gave birth to *children*. ¹⁸For the LORD had closed up all the wombs of the house of Abimelech, because of Abraham’s wife Sarah.

20:11 The first reference in the Bible to the “fear of God”. This fear is not a fear to come to God, or to pray to God. It is not the kind of fear a criminal may have for jails and police. It is a healthy awe and respect for God, a fear of offending Him by sinning. It is exceedingly important for people to have the fear of God.

It restrains from evil doing (Ex 20:20; Prov 16:6).

It is a motive for obeying God (Deut 5:29; 6:2).

It is the beginning of wisdom (Ps 111:10; Prov 1:7; 9:10; 15:33). It results in God’s great blessings (Deut 6:24; Ps 25:14; 33:18-19; 34:7-9; 85:9; 103:11,13,17; 115:13; Prov 14:27; 19:23; Isa 33:6).

It is the duty of all mankind (Ps 33:8), and without it men fall into great evil (Rom 3:18 with preceding verses). We should all pray for it (Ps 86:11).

It is something we may choose to have or not have (Prov 1:29).

See other notes at Job 28:28; Ps 34:11-14; 111:10; Prov 1:7.

20:16 “*Thousand pieces of silver*”– in Hebrew “a thousand shekels”. One shekel equals 11.5 grams. So the total amount was about 11.5 kilograms or 25 pounds – a very large amount showing how seriously Abimelech regarded the matter.

“*To everyone this is your vindication*”– this is the probable meaning of the Hebrew phrase, which is

21 And the LORD looked after Sarah as he had said, and the Lord did for Sarah as he had spoken. ²For Sarah conceived and bore a son to Abraham in his old age, at the very time which God had told him. ³And Abraham called the name of his son who was born to him, whom Sarah bore to him, Isaac. ⁴And when his son Isaac was eight days old Abraham circumcised *him*, as God had commanded him. ⁵And Abraham was a hundred years old when his son Isaac was born to him.

⁶And Sarah said, “God has made me laugh; all who hear *it* will laugh with me”. ⁷And she said, “Who would have told Abraham that Sarah would nurse children? Yet I have borne *him* a son in his old age”.

⁸And the child grew and was weaned, and Abraham made a great feast the same day that Isaac was weaned. ⁹And Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, whom she bore to Abraham, mocking. ¹⁰Therefore she said to Abraham, “Drive out this slave woman and her son, for the son of this slave woman will not be heir with my son, with Isaac”.

¹¹And the thing was very grievous in Abraham’s sight because of his son. ¹²And God said to Abraham, “Let it not be grievous in your sight because of the lad and because of your slave woman. Listen to Sarah’s voice

difficult. The translation of the KJV here is unlikely. **20:17** “*Prayed to God*”– note and references to prayer at 18:32.

20:18 “*Closed up*”– 1 Sam 1:5.

21:1 “*Spoken*”– 17:16; Titus 1:2.

21:3 “*Isaac*”– 17:19.

21:4 See 17:10,12.

21:5 Rom 4:19-21.

21:6 See 18:13.

21:9 This was Ishmael. 16:1,4,15; Gal 4:22-23. At this time he was about sixteen years old, Isaac only two or three.

21:10 Gal 4:29-31.

21:11 The error Abraham made in the matter of Hagar (16:1-2) now brings much sorrow to him. Going our own way in anything usually results in grief. Only the will of God is good, pleasing and perfect – Rom 12:2.

21:12 Rom 9:7; Heb 11:18. Isaac, the child God promised, was chosen by God to be the heir of Abraham and the one through whom the Saviour of the world would come. The covenant of blessing to the world which God had made with Abraham (12:1-3) was confirmed to him. The rest of the Old Testament for the most part, and part of the New Testament is the story of Isaac’s descendants through Jacob. This covenant was not confirmed to Ishmael. There was only the promise that he too would become a great nation – vs 13,18.

in everything she has said to you, for in Isaac shall your offspring be called. ¹³And I will also make a nation of the son of the slave woman, because he *is* your offspring”.

¹⁴And Abraham got up early in the morning, took bread and a bottle of water and gave *it* to Hagar, putting *it* on her shoulder, gave *her* the boy and sent her away. And she left and wandered around in the desert of Beersheba.

¹⁵And the water in the bottle was finished, and she thrust the boy under one of the bushes. ¹⁶And she went and seated herself opposite *him* at a distance of about a bow shot. For she said, “Let me not see the boy’s death”. And she sat opposite *him*, raised her voice, and wept.

¹⁷And God heard the voice of the boy, and the angel of God called to Hagar from heaven and said to her, “What is bothering you, Hagar? Do not be afraid, for God has heard the voice of the lad where he *is*. ¹⁸Get up, pick up the lad, and hold him up with your hand, for I will make him a great nation”.

¹⁹And God opened her eyes, and she saw a well of water and she went, filled the bottle with water, and gave the boy a drink.

²⁰And God was with the boy, and he grew, lived in the desert, and became an archer. ²¹And he lived in the desert of Paran, and his mother took a wife for him from the land of Egypt.

²²And at that time it came about that Abimelech and Phichol, the chief captain of his forces, spoke to Abraham, saying, “God *is* with you in all that you do. ²³So here and now swear

21:14 “*Morning*”— again we see Abraham’s immediate obedience – 17:23; 22:2-3.

“*Boy*”— the KJV here has “child”, which could be misleading. Ishmael was a teenager. The Hebrew means “youth” or “young man” or “boy”, as well as “child”.

21:17 “*Heard*”— Ex 2:24; 3:7; Deut 26:7; Ps 6:8; 10:17; 34:6,15,17; 66:19; 116:11.

21:19 “*Eyes*”— Num 22:31; 2 Kings 6:17. Sometimes God creates new things or new ways to provide for His people; sometimes He merely opens their eyes to what is already there.

21:21 Paran was located south of Canaan in the Sinai peninsula.

21:22 “*Abimelech*”— 20:2.

“*With you*”— 26:28; 28:15; 39:2-3,21; Acts 7:9-10; Heb 13:5-6; Rev 21:3; Ex 33:14-16; 34:8-9; Josh 1:5; Isa 7:14. Note at Ex 25:8.

21:31 Beersheba can have two meanings – “well of the oath” or “well of the seven”.

21:32 “*Philistines*”— 10:14.

to me by God that you will not deal falsely with me or with my son or with my son’s son, but *that* the same kindness that I have shown to you, you will show to me, and to the land where you have been staying for a time”.

²⁴And Abraham said, “I will swear *it*”.

²⁵And Abraham rebuked Abimelech because of a well of water which Abimelech’s servants had taken by force. ²⁶And Abimelech said, “I do not know who has done this thing, and you did not tell me, and I did not hear *it*, until today”.

²⁷And Abraham took sheep and oxen and gave them to Abimelech, and the two of them made a covenant. ²⁸And Abraham put seven ewe lambs from the flock by themselves. ²⁹And Abimelech said to Abraham, “What is *the meaning* of these seven ewe lambs which you have put by themselves?”

³⁰And he said, “Take *these* seven ewe lambs from my hand, so that they will be a witness for me, that I have dug this well”.

³¹Therefore he called that place Beersheba, because there the two of them took an oath.

³²In this way they made a covenant at Beersheba. Then Abimelech and Phichol, the chief captain of his forces, got up and returned to the land of the Philistines. ³³And Abraham planted a grove in Beersheba, and called there on the name of the LORD, the everlasting God. ³⁴And Abraham stayed for many days in the land of the Philistines.

22 And after these things it came about that God tested Abraham, and said to him, “Abraham”. And he said, “See,

21:33 “*Everlasting God*”— Hebrew “El Olam”. Olam comes from a word that has more than one meaning – “hidden” or “secret”, “a long time” or “everlasting”, or “world”. Deut 29:29; 32:39-40; 33:27; Ps 90:2; Isa 40:28; Jer 10:10; Heb 13:8,20,21; Rev 1:18.

22:1 “*Tested Abraham*”— God often asked Abraham to give up things and persons. At first He asked him to give up country and relatives (12:1). Then He asked him to give up his plans for Ishmael (17:17-18). Finally He asked him to give up his son. Just so does the Lord Jesus ask those who would be His disciples to give up everything for Him (Matt 10:37-39; Mark 10:21,29-31; Luke 9:57-62; 14:33). God will test His people’s love for Him, their faith in Him, their obedience to Him. These tests, though they may be difficult and painful, will work for the good of those who endure them. They will increase their faith and teach them many important lessons (Deut 8:2,16; 13:3; Ps 66:10-12; Jam 1:2-4,12; 1 Pet 1:6-7; 4:12-13). God tests us to bring out the good he has put in us. Satan tempts us to bring out the evil in our fallen nature.

here I am”.

²And he said, “Take now your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains which I will tell you about”.

³And Abraham got up early in the morning, saddled his donkey, took two of his young men with him and Isaac his son, cut up the wood for the burnt offering, and arose and went to the place which God had told him about. ⁴Then on the third day Abraham raised his eyes and saw the place at a distance. ⁵And Abraham said to his young men, “Stay here with the donkey. I and the boy will go over there and worship and come back to you”.

⁶And Abraham took the wood of the burnt

offering, and put *it* on his son Isaac. And he took the fire in his hand and a knife, and the two of them went on together. ⁷And Isaac spoke to his father Abraham and said, “My father”. And he said, “Here I am, my son”. And he said, “See, the fire and the wood, but where *is* the lamb for a burnt offering?”

⁸And Abraham said, “My son, God himself will provide a lamb for a burnt offering”. So the two of them went on together.

⁹And they came to the place which God had told him about, and Abraham built an altar there, arranged the wood *on it*, bound his son Isaac, and placed him on top of the wood on the altar. ¹⁰And Abraham stretched out his hand and took the knife to kill his son. ¹¹And the angel of the LORD called

“Here I am” – v 11.

22:2 “Only son” – though Ishmael was a son by the servant girl, Isaac was the only son of Abraham and his wife, the only son related to God’s covenant and promises.

In the Bible the one true God forbids human sacrifice to other gods (Lev 18:21; Deut 18:9-10; 2 Kings 17:17). This is because other gods are not God at all and no one has any right to offer anything to them, let alone fellow human beings. All things and all persons belong to God the Creator, and in a double sense His redeemed people belong to Him (1:27; Ps 50:10; Isa 42:5; Ezek 18:4; Ex 13:1-2; 19:5; Lev 20:26; 1 Cor 6:19-20). Since all men are God’s property He has a perfect right to do with them as He sees fit. He may, if He wants, even demand that they be offered as burnt offerings, as He told Abraham to offer Isaac.

Remember God is a just and holy God. He would never ask Abraham to do something that was wrong (Jam 1:13). Actually this is the only case in the entire Bible when God asked a person to offer another as a sacrifice. It seems God had a two-fold purpose in this. He wished to test Abraham’s devotion and faith and He wished to give a picture of what He Himself planned to do through His son Jesus Christ in offering Him for the sins of the world. The test for Abraham was like this: God had said that Isaac was Abraham’s only son, his heir, the one with whom God would establish His covenant (15:4; 17:16,19; 21:12; 22:2). Would Abraham believe God’s promises even when faced with a command that seemed contrary to them? Would he believe that God could do no wrong and could not break His word? Abraham was equal to this test. He reasoned that if God asked him to do something God had a good reason for it, and that somehow or other God would fulfill His promises (Rom 4:21). He believed that even if he

had to put Isaac to death God would raise him to life again to fulfill His word (Heb 11:17-19).

All this is a picture of what God has done in Jesus Christ. Like Isaac Jesus is the only Son of the Father (John 3:16). He is the heir of the world (Heb 1:2), the one through whom God made His new covenant (Heb 9:15), the one through whom the blessings promised to Abraham would come to the world (Acts 3:26; Gal 3:14; Eph 1:3). God in love to mankind offered Him up as a sacrifice for sinners (Rom 5:8; Heb 9:28; 1 Pet 3:18; 1 John 4:9). Then He raised Him from the dead to fulfill all His promises (Acts 2:24,32-36; 1 Cor 15:3-4). God told Abraham to take Isaac to the “land of Moriah”. Jerusalem was located in this region (2 Chron 3:1). Jerusalem, of course, is the place where the Lord Jesus Christ was crucified and resurrected.

22:3 “Morning” – Abraham practiced instant obedience – 17:23; 21:14.

“Wood” – Abraham fully intended to do what God told him and made preparations for obedience.

22:5 The words “come back” seem to indicate Abraham’s faith.

22:6 “On his son Isaac” – compare John 19:17. Evidently Isaac was no small child. He was able to carry a load, and knew what was going on (v 7).

22:8 “Provide” – verse 13. Compare John 1:29,36; Acts 8:32-35; 1 Pet 1:18-19; Rev 5:6-14.

22:9 “Altar” – there is nothing here to suggest Isaac resisted Abraham. It seems he willingly cooperated with his father in all this. So did Jesus when He faced the cross (John 10:18; Matt 26:39).

22:10 The moment of final obedience came and Abraham did not shrink back.

22:11 “The angel of the LORD” – note at 16:7. The Son of God stopped Abraham. Much later in history He did not stop Himself but willingly gave Himself to death for us all (John 10:11,17,18; Gal 1:4; Phil 2:8).

to him out of heaven and said, “Abraham, Abraham”. And he said, “Here I am”.

¹²And he said, “Do not lay your hand on the boy, and do not do anything to him, for now I know that you fear God, seeing you have not withheld your son, your only son from me”.

¹³And Abraham raised his eyes and looked, and behind *him* a ram appeared, caught in a thicket by its horns. And Abraham went and took the ram and offered it up as a burnt offering instead of his son. ¹⁴And Abraham called the name of that place Jehovah Jireh, just as it is said to this day, “In the mountain of the LORD it will be provided”.

¹⁵And the angel of the LORD called to Abraham out of heaven a second time, ¹⁶and said, “I have sworn by myself, says the LORD, because you have done this thing and have not withheld your son, your only son, ¹⁷that I will certainly bless you, and I will certainly increase *the number of* your offspring like the stars of heaven and like the sand which is on the seashore. And your offspring will possess the gate of his enemies. ¹⁸And in your offspring all the nations of the earth will be blessed, because you have obeyed my voice”.

¹⁹So Abraham returned to his young men, and they got up and went together to Beersheba, and Abraham stayed at Beersheba.

²⁰After these things it came about that *someone* told Abraham, saying, “Now Milcah, she also has borne children to your

brother Nahor: ²¹Huz his firstborn, Buz his brother, Kemuel the father of Aram, ²²Chesed, Hazo, Pildash, Jidlaph, and Bethuel”. ²³And Bethuel became the father of Rebekah. Milcah bore these eight to Nahor, Abraham’s brother. ²⁴And his concubine also, whose name was Reumah, bore Tebah, Gaham, Thahash, and Maachah.

23 And Sarah’s lifespan was a hundred and twenty-seven years. *These were* the years of Sarah’s life. ²And Sarah died in Kirjath Arba. This is Hebron in the land of Canaan. And Abraham came to mourn for Sarah and to weep for her.

³And Abraham got up from the presence of his dead *wife* and spoke to the sons of Heth, saying, ⁴“I *am* a foreigner and a settler among you. Permit me the possession of a burial site among you, so that I may bury my dead out of my sight”.

⁵And the children of Heth answered Abraham, saying to him, ⁶“My lord, listen to us. You *are* a mighty prince among us. Bury your dead in the choicest of our tombs. None of us will refuse you his tomb for burying your dead”.

⁷And Abraham stood up, and bowed down before the people of the land, to the children of Heth. ⁸And he talked with them, saying, “If it is your wish that I should bury my dead out of my sight, listen to me and on my behalf ask Ephron the son of Zohar, ⁹to permit me *to have* the cave of Machpelah, which he owns, which *is* at the end of his

22:14 “*Jehovah Jireh*”— a name meaning “The LORD will provide” – see note at Ex 3:14-15. In Christ Jehovah did provide an offering and a sacrifice for the sins of the world. And that event took place at “the mountain of the LORD”— in Jerusalem.

“*Provided*”—a secondary meaning of the Hebrew word which usually means “seen”. The Lord will see to it means that he will provide it.

22:17 “*I will certainly bless*”— obedience to God always brings blessings. Notes at 12:2-3; Num 6:22-27; Deut 28:1-14; Ps 1:1-2; 119:1. The Hebrew has “blessing I will bless”. Writers in Hebrew sometimes repeated the verb in this way for the sake of emphasis, so “certainly bless” is also correct.

“*Offspring*”— Acts 3:25-26; Gal 3:16.

22:20 “*Nahor*”— 11:29.

22:23 “*Rebekah*”— 24:67.

23:3 “*The sons of Heth*”— Heth was a son of Canaan and the progenitor of the Hittite people. See 10:15.

Note on Hittites at 26:34-35.

23:4 “*Foreigner and a settler*”— 20:13; Lev 25:23; 1 Chron 29:15; Ps 39:12; Heb 11:8-10,13.

“*Permit*”— a secondary meaning of the Hebrew word which also means “give”, but probably the better translation here because Abraham was not asking for the gift of a burial site.

23:6 “*Mighty prince*”— perhaps they were aware of some of Abraham’s activities, such as those in 14:14-16 and 20:17.

23:9 Though God had given Abraham and his descendants the whole land, he actually possessed none of it and had to buy a portion for a burial ground. In the same way, by promise the whole world belongs to believers in Christ (Rom 4:13; 8:17; 1 Cor 3:21-22; Gal 4:7). However, at present most of them possess very little or none of it. The fulfillment of these promises of God await the time when God rises in judgment on the world and the kingdoms of the world becomes the kingdom of God and Christ (Rev 2:26-27; 11:15; 19:15).

field. For its full price let him give it me as a possession for a burial site among you”.

¹⁰And Ephron lived among the children of Heth, and Ephron the Hittite answered Abraham in the hearing of the children of Heth, of all those who went in at the gate of his city, saying, ¹¹“No, my lord, listen to me. I will give the field to you, and I give you the cave that *is* in it. In the presence of the sons of my people I give it to you. Bury your dead”.

¹²And Abraham bowed down himself before the people of the land. ¹³And he spoke to Ephron in the hearing of the people of the land, saying, “But if you *will give it*, please, listen to me. I will give you money for the field. Take *it* from me, and I will bury my dead there”.

¹⁴And Ephron answered Abraham, saying to him, ¹⁵“My lord, listen to me. The land is worth four hundred shekels of silver. What *is* that between me and you? So bury your dead”.

¹⁶And Abraham listened to Ephron, and Abraham weighed the silver for Ephron, *the price* he had named in the hearing of the sons of Heth, four hundred shekels of silver, current money with the merchant.

¹⁷And the field of Ephron, which was in Machpelah, which faced Mamre, the field and the cave that was in it and all the trees that *were* in the field, that *were* in all the area of its borders, were deeded ¹⁸to Abraham as a possession in the presence of the children of Heth, before all who went in at the gate of his city. ¹⁹And after this, Abraham buried his wife Sarah in the cave of the field of Machpelah facing Mamre. This *is* Hebron in the land of Canaan. ²⁰And the field, and the cave that *is* in it were deeded to Abraham

by the sons of Heth as a possession for a burial site.

24 And Abraham was old, well advanced in age, and the LORD had blessed Abraham in all things. ²And Abraham said to his servant, the oldest of his household, who was in charge of all that he had, “Please, place your hand under my thigh, ³and I will make you swear by the LORD, the God of heaven, and the God of the earth, that you will not take a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I live. ⁴But you shall go to my country, and to my relatives, and take a wife for my son Isaac”.

⁵And the servant said to him, “Perhaps the woman will not be willing to follow me to this land. Should I take your son back to the land that you came from?”

⁶And Abraham said to him, “You be careful that you do not take my son back there. ⁷The LORD God of heaven, who took me from my father’s house and from the land of my relatives, and who spoke to me, and who swore to me, saying, ‘To your offspring I will give this land’, he will send his angel before you, and you shall take a wife for my son from there. ⁸And if the woman is not willing to follow you, then you will be free from this oath of mine. Only do not take my son back there”. ⁹And the servant placed his hand under the thigh of Abraham his master, and swore to him about that matter.

¹⁰And the servant took ten camels of his master’s camels, and left, for all the goods of his master *were in* his charge. And he arose and went to Mesopotamia, to the city of Nahor. ¹¹And he made his camels kneel down outside the city by a well of water, at evening time, the time when women go out to draw water.

23:10 “*Gate*”— v 18; 19:1; Deut 25:7; Josh 20:4; Ruth 4:11.

23:15 “*Shekels*”— the total amount was about 4.5 kilograms – probably a very high price for a field in Abraham’s day (compare Jer 32:9). Sometimes those people who at first seem most generous will take the greatest advantage of others.

24:1 “*Blessed*”— 12:2; 13:2; 24:35.

24:2 “*Thigh*”— a custom then when making a very solemn promise (47:29).

24:3 Deut 7:3; Ezra 9:1-4; 1 Cor 7:39; 2 Cor 6:14-17. Abraham worshiped the one true God in spirit and in truth (John 4:24). The Canaanites worshiped many gods and idols. Abraham wanted to keep his son separate from such things. And he knew that

a Canaanite wife might turn his son to idolatry. Compare Deut 7:3-4; 1 Kings 11:1-6; Ezra 9:1-4; 1 Cor 7:39; 2 Cor 6:14-18.

24:4 “*My country*”— not Ur of Chaldea, but where Abraham lived later for a while – v 10; 11:31.

24:7 “*Land*”— 12:7; 13:5; 15:18.

“*His angel*”— note at 16:7. This marriage was arranged in heaven.

24:9 Verse 2.

24:10 The servant in this chapter is a model for all who would serve God. He was obedient, prayerful, tactful, faithful, waited on God for guidance, and honored and praised his master.

“*Mesopotamia*”— an area northeast of Canaan in what is now called Syria.

¹²And he said, “O LORD God of my master Abraham, please send me good success today, and show kindness to my master Abraham. ¹³See, I am standing *here* by the well of water, and the daughters of the men of the city are coming out to draw water. ¹⁴Let it come about that the girl to whom I say, ‘Please let down your water pot so I can drink’, and she says, ‘Drink, and I will water your camels also’, *let her be the one* that you have decided on for your servant Isaac. And by that I will know that you have shown kindness to my master”.

¹⁵And it came about before he had finished speaking, that here came Rebekah, who had been born to Bethuel, son of Milcah, the wife of Nahor, Abraham’s brother. *She had* her water pot on her shoulder. ¹⁶And the young woman *was* very beautiful to behold, a virgin, no man had known her. And she went down to the well, filled her water pot, and came up.

¹⁷And the servant ran to meet her and said, “Please let me drink a little water from your water pot”.

¹⁸And she said, “Drink, my lord”, and she hurried and lowered her water pot onto her hand and gave him a drink.

¹⁹And when she had finished giving him a drink, she said, “I will draw *water* for your camels also, until they have finished drinking”. ²⁰And she hurried and emptied her water pot into the trough, and ran again to the well to draw *water*, and drew for all his camels. ²¹And the man, keeping silent, watched her to find out whether the LORD had made his journey successful or not.

²²And this happened when the camels had finished drinking: the man took a gold earring of half a *shekel* weight and two bracelets of ten shekels weight of gold for her arms, ²³and said, “Whose daughter are you? Please tell me. Is there room *in* your father’s house for us to spend the night?”

²⁴And she said to him, “I *am* the daughter of Bethuel, the son of Milcah, whom she bore to Nahor”. ²⁵She also said to him, “We have both straw and fodder enough, and room to spend the night”.

²⁶And the man bowed his head, and worshipped the LORD. ²⁷And he said, “Blessed be the LORD God of my master Abraham, who has not forsaken his mercy and his truth toward my master. I being on the way, the LORD has led me to the house of my master’s brothers”.

²⁸And the girl ran and told these things to those in her mother’s house. ²⁹And Rebekah had a brother. His name was Laban. And Laban ran out to the man at the well. ³⁰And it came about when he saw the earring, and bracelets on his sister’s arms, and when he heard the words of his sister Rebekah saying, “This is what the man said to me”, that he came to the man. And there he stood by the camels at the well. ³¹And he said, “Come in, you blessed of the Lord. Why are you standing outside? For I have got the house ready, and a place for the camels”.

³²And the man came into the house. And *Laban* unloaded his camels, and gave straw and fodder for the camels, and water to wash his feet and the feet of the men who were with him. ³³And *food* was set before him to eat, but he said, “I will not eat until I have told my business”. And he said, “Tell it”.

³⁴And he said, “I *am* Abraham’s servant. ³⁵And the LORD has greatly blessed my master *so that* he has become rich; and he has given him flocks and herds, and silver and gold, and male servants and female servants, and camels and donkeys. ³⁶And my master’s wife Sarah bore a son to my master when she was old. And to him he has given all that he has. ³⁷And my master made me swear, saying, ‘You shall not take a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites in whose land I am living, ³⁸but you shall go to my father’s house and to my relatives, and take a wife for my son.’ ³⁹And I said to my master, ‘Perhaps the woman will not follow me.’

⁴⁰“And he said to me, ‘The LORD, before whom I walk, will send his angel with you and make your journey a success, and you will take a wife for my son from my relatives, from my father’s household. ⁴¹When you go to my relatives, then you will be free from

24:14 On asking God for signs see note and references at 15:8.

24:15 “*Speaking*”— Isa 65:24.

24:22 “*Ten shekels*”— about 110 grams.

24:27 “*Led*”— compare Ps 25:9; 32:8; 48:14; 73:24; Prov 3:5-6.

24:35 Material prosperity was often a sign of God’s blessing then, but not necessarily now. Many godly people are poor, many godless people are rich (Luke 6:20-26; 16:19-31; Jam 2:5-7).

24:40 “*Walk*”— see 17:1.

this my oath. If they do not give her to you, you will be free from my oath.'

⁴²"And today I came to the well and said, 'O LORD God of my master Abraham, if now you will give success to the journey I have come on, ⁴³see, I am standing by the well of water, and it will happen that when the virgin comes out to draw water, and I say to her, 'Please give me a little water from your water pot to drink', ⁴⁴and she says to me, 'You drink, and I will also draw water for your camels', *let her be* the woman whom the LORD has decided on for my master's son.'

⁴⁵"And before I had finished speaking in my heart, suddenly Rebekah came out with her water pot on her shoulder, and she went down to the well and drew water. And I said to her, 'Please let me drink.'

⁴⁶"And she hurried and lowered her water pot from her *shoulder*, and said, 'Drink, and I will water your camels also.' So I drank, and she watered the camels also.

⁴⁷"And I asked her and said, 'Whose daughter *are you*?' And she said, 'The daughter of Bethuel, Nahor's son, whom Milcah bore to him'. And I put the ring on her face, and the bracelets on her arms. ⁴⁸And I bowed my head and worshipped the LORD, and praised the LORD God of my master Abraham, who had led me in the right way to take my master's brother's daughter for his son. ⁴⁹And now if you will deal kindly and faithfully with my master, tell me, and if not, tell me, so that I may turn to the right or to the left".

⁵⁰Then Laban and Bethuel answered and said, "The matter comes from the LORD. We cannot speak to you *anything either* bad or good. ⁵¹See, Rebekah is before you. Take *her* and go, and let her be your master's son's wife, as the Lord has said".

⁵²And it came about that, when Abraham's servant heard their words, he worshipped the LORD, *bowing himself* to the ground. ⁵³And the servant took out silver jewels, gold jewels, and clothing, and gave *them* to Rebekah. Also he gave to her brother and to her mother valuable things. ⁵⁴And they ate and drank, he

24:60 See 22:17.

24:67 In the events of the Old Testament there are often pictures of spiritual truth later revealed in the New Testament. Some think we have a picture in this chapter of the same truth Jesus presented in the parable of the king who made a marriage for his son (Matt 22:2). If this is so (and it is possible, though not at all certain) Abraham would represent God the Father who would

and the men who were with him, and spent the night *there*. In the morning they got up and he said, "Send me away to my master".

⁵⁵And her brother and her mother said, "Let the girl stay with us for a *few* days, at least ten. After that she will go".

⁵⁶And he said to them, "Do not delay me, since the LORD has made my journey successful. Send me away so I can go to my master".

⁵⁷And they said, "We will call the girl, and ask her what she has to say".

⁵⁸And they called Rebekah and said to her, "Will you go with this man?" And she said, "I will go".

⁵⁹And they sent away their sister Rebekah, and her nurse, and Abraham's servant and his men. ⁶⁰And they blessed Rebekah and said to her, "You are our sister. *May you become* the mother of thousands of millions, and may your offspring possess the gate of those who hate them".

⁶¹And Rebekah and her maids got up, and rode on the camels, and followed the man. So the servant took Rebekah, and went his way. ⁶²And Isaac had come from the way of the well Lahai Roi, for he lived in the south *of the* country. ⁶³And Isaac went out to meditate in the field in the evening, and he raised his eyes and looked, and there *were* the camels coming. ⁶⁴And Rebekah raised her eyes, and when she saw Isaac, she got down from the camel, ⁶⁵for she had said to the servant, "What man is this walking in the field to meet us?" And the servant had said, "It is my master". So she took a veil and covered herself.

⁶⁶And the servant told Isaac everything that he had done. ⁶⁷And Isaac brought her into the tent of his mother Sarah, and took Rebekah, and she became his wife. And he loved her. So Isaac was comforted after his mother's *death*.

25 Then again Abraham took a wife. Her name was Keturah. ²And she bore him Zimran, Jokshan, Medan, Midian, Ishbak, and Shuah. ³And Jokshan begat

make a marriage for His Son. The servant would represent the Holy Spirit who has come into the world to win the bride and who presents Christ to people (John 16:13-14). Rebekah would represent the bride of Christ, His Church (2 Cor 11:2; Eph 5:25-32; Rev 19:7-8). Isaac would represent the Lord Jesus Christ who goes out to meet her (John 14:3; 1 Thess 4:16-17).

25:1 Keturah means "incense".

Sheba and Dedan. And the sons of Dedan were Asshurim, Letushim, and Leummim.

⁴And the sons of Midian: Ephah, Epher, Hanoch, Abidah, and Eldaah. All these were the children of Keturah.

⁵But Abraham gave all that he had to Isaac.

⁶But to the sons of the concubines whom Abraham had, Abraham gave gifts while he was still living, and sent them away from Isaac his son, eastward, to the east country.

⁷And these are the days of the years of Abraham's life: he lived a hundred and seventy-five years. ⁸Then Abraham expired, dying in a good old age, an old man and full of years, and was gathered to his people. ⁹And his sons Isaac and Ishmael buried him in the cave of Machpelah, in the field of Ephron the son of Zohar the Hittite, which faces Mamre, ¹⁰the field which Abraham purchased from the sons of Heth. Abraham and his wife Sarah were buried there. ¹¹And it came about after the death of Abraham, that God blessed his son Isaac. Isaac lived by the well Lahai Roi.

¹²Now these are the generations of Ishmael, Abraham's son, whom Hagar the Egyptian, Sarah's handmaid, bore to Abraham; ¹³these are the names of the sons of Ishmael, by their names, according to their generations: the firstborn of Ishmael, Nebajoth, and Kedar, Adbeel, Mibsam, ¹⁴Mishma, Dumah,

25:5 See 15:4; 24:36.

25:6 "Concubines"—the practice of polygamy was common in the ancient world, but it was not God's instruction to men. See 2:24; 30:1.

25:7 Abraham lived 38 years after the death of his first wife.

25:8 "Gathered to his people"—this phrase, meaning death, is used often in the Old Testament (25:17; 35:29; 49:29,33). There may be in the phrase, as some think, a suggestion of survival after death.

25:9-10 See 23:17-18.

25:10 "Sons of Heth"—the Hittites.

25:11 See 12:2-3; 26:3.

25:16 See 17:20-21.

25:18 Many present-day Arabs claim descent from Ishmael.

25:20 "Padam-Aram"—a region in what is present-day Syria.

25:21 "Barren"—20:17-18; 1 Sam 1:2-17; 2:5; Ps 113:9; 127:3; Isa 54:1.

"Prayer"—Ps 65:2; 66:18-19.

25:23 "Nations"—Edom and Israel—32:3; Deut 2:4,8; 2 Sam 8:14; Jer 49:7-8; Amos 1:11; Oba 1:1; Mal 1:2.

"Younger"—27:40; Rom 9:10-15. This was the exact reverse of the usual custom and order. But God's choice is according to His foreknowledge

and sovereign will, and does not depend on the natural order of things.

Massa, ¹⁵Hadar, Tema, Jetur, Naphish, and Kedemah. ¹⁶These were the sons of Ishmael, and these are their names, by their towns, and by their camps, twelve princes according to their nations. ¹⁷And these were the years of the life of Ishmael: a hundred and thirty-seven years, and he expired. He died and was gathered to his people. ¹⁸And they lived from Havilah to Shur, that is east of Egypt, as you go toward Assyria. He died in the presence of all his brothers.

¹⁹And these are the generations of Isaac, Abraham's son: Abraham begot Isaac. ²⁰And Isaac was forty years old when he married Rebekah, the daughter of Bethuel the Syrian of Padan-Aram, the sister of Laban the Syrian.

²¹And Isaac prayed to the LORD for his wife, because she was barren. And his prayer was accepted by the LORD, and his wife Rebekah conceived. ²²And the children struggled together in her, and she said, "If it is so, why am I like this?" And she went to ask the LORD.

²³And the LORD said to her, "Two nations are in your womb, and two kinds of people will be separated from your body; and the one people will be stronger than the other people, and the older will serve the younger".

²⁴And when her days to give birth were fulfilled, indeed there were twins in her

and sovereign will, and does not depend on the natural order of things.

25:24 "Twins"—see how close together in time Jacob and Esau were born—Jacob was holding the heel of his brother. According to those who follow astrology they were born under the same sign of the zodiac. The position of the stars and planets were the same for both of them. Yet how vastly different were their whole futures! One became loved and blessed by God, and the other became rejected and hated by God—see Mal 1:2-3. Their futures were not in the stars but in their response to God and in God's decisions about them. This is always true. The position of planets and stars when we are born has absolutely nothing to do with what we will become.

Astrology cannot explain why the lives of twins should be so different, or anything else that can stand examination. It is a senseless superstition. Those who teach it have found it is a way to make money and to hold people in their power. In the case of Jacob and Esau (and this is true of us all), the important thing was the way they responded to the true and living God, and their attitude toward His promises. Jacob, though he had many faults, had faith in God and put great value on those promises. Esau did not care about either God or His promises. On astrology see Daniel chapter 2 and the note at 2:2.

womb. ²⁵And the first came out red, like a hairy garment all over. And they called his name Esau. ²⁶And after that his brother came out, his hand holding on to Esau's heel. And his name was called Jacob. Isaac was sixty years old when she bore them.

²⁷And the boys grew. Esau was a skillful hunter, a man of the open field, but Jacob was a quiet man, staying in tents. ²⁸And Isaac loved Esau because he ate of his venison, but Rebekah loved Jacob.

²⁹And Jacob was boiling some soup, and Esau came from the field, and he was weary. ³⁰And Esau said to Jacob, "Please let me eat some of that red soup, for I'm worn out". Therefore his name was called Edom.

³¹And Jacob said, "Sell me this day your birthright".

³²And Esau said, "Look, I am about to die, and so what good will this birthright do me?"

³³And Jacob said, "Swear to me this day", and he swore to him, and sold his birthright to Jacob.

³⁴Then Jacob gave Esau bread and lentil soup, and he ate and drank, and got up and went his way. Thus Esau despised his birthright.

25:25 Esau means "hairy".

25:26 Jacob means "he grasps the heel". This signified a person who is a "supplanter" or "deceiver".

25:27 "*Open field*"— the word "field" does not mean he was a farmer. The Hebrew word can also mean an area where wild animals are. Esau was not one for plowing the fields, but for hunting or playing in them.

25:29 "*Was boiling some soup*"— the Hebrew word here translated "soup" means literally "something boiled", such as soup, stew, or such like.

25:30 Edom means "red".

25:31 "*Sell me*"— Jacob began to show his scheming nature. But God would have fulfilled His will for him without his tricks (note at 27:18-26).

"*Birthright*"— the one who had the birthright or right of the firstborn was to be the head of the family. In this case, he was the one who would be in line to have the promise of the land and the blessings God had promised and through whom the Saviour of the world would come. Later, at least, the firstborn received a double portion of the inheritance (Deut 21:17).

25:32-34 Esau was not about to die. It was simply that he cared nothing for the promises of God, and for his birthright which made him the heir of those promises. He was a mere worldly man without faith and saw no reason to sacrifice a present pleasure for a future

26 And there was a famine in the land, besides the first famine that was in the days of Abraham. And Isaac went to Gerar to Abimelech king of the Philistines. ²And the LORD appeared to him and said, "Do not go down to Egypt. Stay in the land which I will tell you about. ³Stay in this land for a time, and I will be with you, and will bless you. For to you and to your offspring I will give all these lands, and I will confirm the oath which I swore to Abraham your father, ⁴and I will make your offspring to increase in number like the stars of heaven, and will give all these lands to your offspring, and in your offspring all the nations of the earth will be blessed, ⁵because Abraham obeyed my voice, and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws".

⁶And Isaac stayed in Gerar, ⁷and the men of the place asked him about his wife, and he said, "She is my sister", for he was afraid to say, "She is my wife", thinking "The men of the place will kill me for Rebekah, because she is beautiful to behold".

⁸And when he had been there a long time, it so happened that Abimelech, king of the Philistines, looked out a window and now

good. Like many today his god was his belly (Phil 3:19). He is described in Heb 12:16-17. Jacob in many ways was an unspiritual man and was willing to take advantage of his brother. He should of course simply have fed him without asking anything for it. Later, in chapter 27, he was willing to deceive his father to get what he wanted. But with all his faults he had a true faith in God which made him value God's promised blessings. Faith is exceedingly important in God's sight – 15:6; Heb 11:6; 1 John 5:10; Ps 78:21-22; Hab 2:4; Matt 17:20; 21:21-22; Mark 9:23; 11:24; John 3:36. **25:34** "*Despised*"— the Hebrew word does not mean "hated" but "regarded with contempt" or "disdained". The birthright meant nothing to Esau.

26:1 "*Famine*"— 12:10.

"*Abimelech*"— 20:1-2; title to Psalm 34. It is probable that Abimelech was a title of successive Philistine kings, as Pharaoh was of Egyptian kings.

"*Philistines*"— note at 10:14.

26:2 "*Appeared*"— note at 12:7.

26:3-4 See 15:18; 17:8; 22:15-18; 26:24; 28:15; 31:3; Gal 3:8.

26:5 "*Obeded*"— 12:4; 17:9,23; 18:19; 22:18. Here again is the teaching that obedience brings God's blessing.

26:7 Like father, like son (Gen 12:13; 20:2,12).

saw Isaac caressing his wife Rebekah. ⁹And Abimelech called Isaac and said, “Look, surely she *is* your wife, and how is it that you said, ‘She *is* my sister?’” And Isaac said to him, “Because I said that I may die on her account”.

¹⁰And Abimelech said, “What is this you have done to us? One of the people might easily have lain with your wife, and you would have brought guilt on us”.

¹¹And Abimelech ordered all *his* people, saying, “He who touches this man or his wife will surely be put to death”.

¹²Then Isaac sowed *seed* in that land and obtained in the same year a hundredfold, and the LORD blessed him, ¹³and the man became rich and went on increasing until he became very rich. ¹⁴He had possessions of flocks, possessions of herds, and great number of servants, and the Philistines envied him. ¹⁵So all the wells which his father’s servants had dug in the days of his father Abraham the Philistines stopped up and filled them with earth.

¹⁶And Abimelech said to Isaac, “Go away from us. For you are much more powerful than we *are*”.

¹⁷And Isaac left there and pitched his tent in the valley of Gerar, and stayed there. ¹⁸And Isaac dug out the wells of water again, which they had dug in the days of Abraham his father, for the Philistines had stopped them up after the death of Abraham. And he called their names according to the names which his father had given them.

¹⁹And Isaac’s servants dug in the valley, and found there a well of springing water.

²⁰And the herdsmen of Gerar quarreled with Isaac’s herdsmen, saying, “The water *is* ours”, and so he called the name of the well Esek, because they quarreled with him.

²¹And they dug another well, and quarreled about that *one* also, and so he called its name

26:9 “*I may die*”— it is better to lose one’s life than to be a liar. For God hates lying, but loves those who are willing to die rather than sin. Here once more we see that fear may cause men to sin. Note at 18:15.

26:10 Again an outsider has to rebuke one of God’s people (20:9).

26:12-22 God forgave Isaac and gave him blessing. However, though Isaac was prospering materially his days in Gerar were a time of continual strife and difficulties. He is an example to us of a man of peace who would rather move on than fight with his neighbors. And he did not take revenge on them (Rom 12:17-19; Heb 12:14).

26:20 “Esek” means “dispute”. “Sitnah” means “opposition”. “Rehoboth” means “wide space”.

Sitnah. ²²And he moved from there and dug another well, and they did not quarrel about that *one*, and he gave it the name Rehoboth, saying, “For now the LORD has made room for us, and we will be fruitful in the land”.

²³And he went up from there to Beersheba.

²⁴And the Lord appeared to him the same night and said, “I *am* the God of your father Abraham. Do not be afraid, for I *am* with you, and will bless you, and increase *the number of* your offspring, for the sake of my servant Abraham”.

²⁵And he built an altar there, and called on the name of the LORD, and pitched his tent there. And Isaac’s servants dug a well there.

²⁶Then Abimelech went to him from Gerar, and Ahuzzath, one of his friends, and Phichol, the commander of his army, came with him. ²⁷And Isaac said to them, “Why have you come to me, seeing that you hated me and sent me away from you?”

²⁸And they said, “We saw that the LORD was really with you, and we said, ‘Now let there be an oath between us, between us and you, and let us make a covenant with you, so ²⁹that you will not harm us, just as we have not touched you, and have done to you nothing but good, and have sent you away in peace. You are now blessed by the LORD.’ ”

³⁰And he made a feast for them, and they ate and drank. ³¹And they got up early in the morning, and gave *their* oath to one another. Then Isaac sent them away, and they departed from him in peace.

³²And it so happened that the same day Isaac’s servants came and told him about the well which they had dug, and said to him, “We have found water”. ³³And he called it Shebah. Therefore the name of the city *is* Beersheba to this day.

³⁴And Esau was forty years old when he

26:24 “*Abraham*”— v 5.

26:25 “*Altar*”— 8:20; 12:7.

26:28 “*With you*”— 21:22. When it was clear that God was with Isaac it made a profound impression on his enemies and resulted in peace (Prov 16:7).

26:33 “*Shebah*”— means both “oath” and “seven”.

“*Beersheba*”— 21:31.

26:34-35 Esau married women of the land who worshiped idols and gods other than Jehovah the one true God. Isaac did not do for Esau what Abraham had done for him (24:3-4). The Hittites were a powerful people whose center of power was in what is now called Turkey. Many of them had settled in Canaan and the country was once controlled by them (23:3; Num 13:29; 2 Sam 11:3).

married Judith the daughter of Beeri the Hittite, and Bashemath the daughter of Elon the Hittite. ³⁵They were a grief of mind to Isaac and to Rebekah.

27 And it came about that when Isaac was old, and his eyes were so dim that he could not see, he called his older son Esau and said to him, “My son”, and he said to him, “See, *here* I am”.

²And he said, “Look now, I am old, and I do not know the day of my death. ³Please take your weapons now, your quiver and your bow, and go out to the field, and get me some venison, ⁴and prepare for me the kind of tasty food I love, and bring *it* to me, so that I can eat, that my soul may bless you before I die”.

⁵And Rebekah was listening when Isaac spoke to his son Esau. And Esau went to the field to hunt for venison and bring *it*. ⁶And Rebekah spoke to Jacob her son, saying, “Look, I heard your father speaking to your brother Esau, saying, ⁷‘Bring me venison and prepare for me tasty food, so that I may eat, and bless you in the LORD’s presence before my death.’ ⁸Therefore, my son, now obey my voice in what I command you. ⁹Go now to the flock, and bring me from there two choice young goats, and with them I will prepare for your father the kind of tasty food he loves, ¹⁰and you shall take it to your

father, so that he may eat, and so that he may bless you before his death”.

¹¹And Jacob said to his mother Rebekah, “Look, my brother Esau *is* a hairy man, and I am a man *with* smooth skin. ¹²Perhaps my father will touch me, and *then* I will seem like a deceiver to him, and I will bring a curse on myself, and not a blessing”.

¹³And his mother said to him, “Your curse be on me, my son. Just obey my voice and you get *them* for me”.

¹⁴And he went and got *them* and brought *them* to his mother. And his mother prepared the kind of tasty food that his father loved. ¹⁵And Rebekah took the best clothes of her older son Esau, which *were* with her in the house, and put them on Jacob her younger son. ¹⁶And she put the skins of the young goats on his hands and on the smooth skin of his neck, ¹⁷and she placed the tasty food and the bread, which she had prepared, in the hand of her son Jacob.

¹⁸And he came to his father and said, “My father”, and he said, “Here I am. Who *are* you, my son?”

¹⁹And Jacob said to his father, “I *am* Esau your firstborn. I have done as you told me. Please get up, sit and eat *some* of my venison, so that your soul may bless me”.

²⁰And Isaac said to his son, “How *is it* that you have found it so quickly, my son?” And he said, “Because the LORD your God

27:1-4 Did Isaac understand that God had rejected Esau and chosen Jacob? Or, even having understood, did he decide to put his own will above God’s and give the chief blessing, the blessing of the firstborn, to Esau anyway? We are not told what was in his mind and heart, but it seems he had no intention of blessing Jacob at all. This favoritism had its roots in an unspiritual motive – see 25:28. Isaac had a sinful nature, as all men have. Compare 9:21; 12:13; Rom 3:9-20.

27:5-17 Rebekah determined to get the blessing of Isaac for Jacob (and through Isaac the blessing of God), even though it meant deceiving her husband. Evidently she regarded God’s promises as something of great value. But she also was guilty of favoritism (25:28).

27:18-26 Jacob too was willing to lie and deceive in order to get God’s blessing. In all this, though both Jacob and his mother sinned, they showed their faith in God’s promises. And faith, even weak faith, is very important in God’s dealings with men (references at 25:34). God rewarded their faith but He punished their deception. Jacob indeed got the blessing but later he himself was

deceived and suffered much at the hands of his father-in-law (29:25; 31:7,40,41). And Rebekah no doubt suffered because she was separated from Jacob and may never have seen him again (28:5. After chapter 27 Rebecca no longer appears in Genesis). God hates lying and deception and will certainly punish it (Prov 6:16-19; 12:22; 19:5,9; Gal 6:7; Eph 4:15,25; Col 3:9).

It was not only sinful for Jacob to deceive his father, it was also quite unnecessary. Before Esau and Jacob were born God had already chosen Jacob and said that the elder (Esau) would serve the younger (Jacob). See 25:23; Rom 9:10-13. God would have fulfilled His word without the scheming and lying of Jacob and his mother. It is never necessary for men to use tricks, lies and deception to get God to fulfill His will toward them. God will do it in His time and way if men will trust Him and leave matters in His hands. Notes at 12:13; Josh 2:5; 1 Sam 27:10; 2 Sam 15:34.

27:20 “*Your God*” – Jacob does not say, “my God” (see 28:21; 31:54; 35:3). And he was willing to lie in God’s name, which shows how far he had to go to become a spiritual man.

brought *it* to me”.

²¹And Isaac said to Jacob, “Please come near, so that I can touch you, my son, *to see whether you are really my son Esau or not*”.

²²And Jacob went near to Isaac his father. And he touched him and said, “The voice *is* Jacob’s voice, but the hands *are* the hands of Esau”. ²³And he did not recognize him, because his hands were hairy like his brother Esau’s hands. So he blessed him. ²⁴And he said, “*Are you really my son Esau?*” And he said, “I am”.

²⁵And he said, “Bring *it* near me and I will eat of my son’s venison, so that my soul may bless you”. And he brought *it* near him, and he ate, and he brought him wine and he drank.

²⁶And his father Isaac said to him, “Come near now, and kiss me, my son”.

²⁷And he came near and kissed him. And he smelled the odor of his clothes, and blessed him, and said,

“See, the smell of my son
is like the smell of a field
which the Lord has blessed.

²⁸Therefore may God give you
of the dew of heaven,
and of the fatness of the earth,
and an abundance of grain
and wine.

²⁹Let people serve you,
and nations bow down
to you.
Be lord over your brothers,
and let your mother’s sons
bow down to you.
Cursed *be* every one
who curses you,
and blessed *be* he who
blesses you”.

³⁰And it came about that, as soon as Isaac had finished blessing Jacob and Jacob had hardly gone away from the presence of his father Isaac, Esau his brother came in from

his hunting. ³¹And he too had prepared tasty food, and *now he* brought it to his father, and said to his father, “Let my father get up and eat of his son’s venison, so that your soul may bless me”.

³²And his father Isaac said to him, “Who *are* you?” And he said, “I *am* your son, your firstborn Esau”.

³³And Isaac trembled violently and said, “Who? Where *is* the one who got venison and brought it to me? And I ate all *of it* before you came, and blessed him. Yes, *and* he will be blessed”.

³⁴And when Esau heard the words of his father, he cried out with a very great and bitter cry and said to his father, “Bless me, me too, O my father”.

³⁵And he said, “Your brother came deceitfully and took away your blessing”.

³⁶And he said, “Is he not rightly named Jacob? For he has supplanted me these two times. He took away my birthright, and, see, now he has taken away my blessing”. And he said, “Haven’t you reserved a blessing for me?”

³⁷And Isaac answered and said to Esau, “Look, I have made him your lord, and I have given all his brothers to him for servants, and I have sustained him with corn and wine. And now what will I do for you, my son?”

³⁸And Esau said to his father, “Have you only one blessing, my father? Bless me, me too, O my father”. And Esau raised his voice and wept.

³⁹And his father Isaac answered and said to him,

“See, your dwelling will be
away from the fatness of the earth,
and from the dew of heaven
from above.

⁴⁰And you will live by
your sword,
and will serve your brother.
And it will come about when

27:27-29 This was the blessing God gave to Abraham in different words (12:1-3), and what the Lord had already told Rebekah in 25:23.

27:31 Verse 4. Was Isaac unable to give a blessing without eating a tasty meal?

27:33 “*He will be blessed*”— Isaac believed that he had given God’s blessing to Jacob and that nothing could change it (Heb 11:20; Num 23:19-20). And indeed nothing could. Compare 9:25-27; 49:1.

27:34 Esau thought of what he had lost too late (25:33-34). Now he could not change his father’s mind. See Heb 12:15-17.

27:36 “*Jacob*”— 25:26. Esau here angrily describes what the name Jacob means. Jacob both deceived Esau and took his place to get the blessing.

27:39 The land of the Edomites, which was south of the Dead Sea, was rocky and barren.

“*From the fatness*”— the Hebrew may also mean “of the fatness”.

you grow restless,
that you will break his yoke
from off your neck”.

⁴¹And Esau hated Jacob because of the blessing with which his father had blessed him, and Esau said in his heart, “The days of mourning for my father are at hand. Then I will kill my brother Jacob”.

⁴²And these words of her elder son Esau were told to Rebekah, and she sent *word* and called her younger son Jacob and said to him, “Look, your brother Esau is consoling himself about you, *by planning* to kill you. ⁴³Now therefore, my son, obey my voice. Get up and flee to Haran to Laban my brother, ⁴⁴and stay with him a few days, until your brother’s fury subsides; ⁴⁵*just* until your brother’s anger against you subsides, and he forgets what you have done to him. Then I will send and get you from there. Why should I be deprived of you both in one day?”

⁴⁶And Rebekah said to Isaac, “I am weary of my life because of the daughters of Heth. If Jacob takes a wife of the daughters of Heth, such as these *who are* of the daughters of the land, what good will my life be to me?”

28 And Isaac called Jacob and blessed him, and spoke to him giving him this command: “You shall not take a wife from among the daughters of Canaan. ²Arise, go to Padan-Aram, to the house of Bethuel your mother’s father, and take a wife for yourself from there from among the daughters of Laban your mother’s brother. ³And God Almighty bless you, make you fruitful, and increase your *number* so that you may become a multitude of people, ⁴and give you

the blessing of Abraham, to you and to your offspring with you, so that you may inherit the land in which you are a foreigner, which God gave to Abraham”. ⁵And Isaac sent Jacob away. And he went to Padan-Aram to Laban, son of Bethuel the Syrian, the brother of Rebekah, the mother of Jacob and Esau.

⁶And Esau saw that Isaac had blessed Jacob and sent him away to Padan-Aram to take a wife for himself from there, *and that* when he blessed him he gave him a command saying, “You shall not take a wife from among the daughters of Canaan”, ⁷and that Jacob obeyed his father and his mother, and went to Padan-Aram. ⁸When Esau saw that the daughters of Canaan did not please Isaac his father, ⁹then Esau went to Ishmael, and in addition to the wives he *already* had, took Mahalath the daughter of Ishmael son of Abraham, the sister of Nebajoth, to be his wife.

¹⁰And Jacob left Beersheba and went toward Haran. ¹¹And he came to a certain place and spent all night there, because the sun had set. And he took *one* of the stones of that place, and put it for his pillow and lay down in that place to sleep. ¹²And he dreamed, and a ladder appeared, set up on the earth and its top reached to heaven, and the angels of God appeared, ascending and descending on it. ¹³And the LORD appeared, standing above it and saying, “I *am* the LORD God of Abraham your father, and the God of Isaac. I will give the land where you are lying to you and to your offspring, ¹⁴and your offspring will be like the dust of the earth *in number*, and you will spread out to the west, to the east, to the north, and to the south, and in you and in your offspring

27:40 “*Grow restless*”– the KJV has “shalt have the dominion”, but this is so unlikely to be the meaning of the Hebrew here that we have changed it.

“*Neck*”– 2 Kings 8:20-22.

27:41 “*Kill*”– this was a further corruption of a nature already seen to be corrupt (25:34. Compare 4:8). But how great the trouble usually caused by deceit!

27:46 See 26:34-35. This was Rebekah’s way of getting Isaac to send Jacob away out of danger.

28:1 “*Blessed him*”– Isaac accepted the fact that God had chosen Jacob (28:3).

“*Of Canaan*”– 10:15-19 – the Canaanites were the inhabitants of the land before Abraham came there.

28:3 “*God Almighty*”– in Hebrew El-Shaddai – note at 17:1.

28:4 See 12:2-3; 15:18-21.

28:10 Now the story of the Bible narrows down to Jacob and his descendants, because the covenant God made with Abraham has been confirmed to Jacob, and it is through his descendants that God had determined to bring His blessings to the world.

“*Haran*”– 11:31.

28:12 “*Dreamed*”– notes at 15:12; Num 12:6; Deut 13:1.

“*Ladder*”– see John 1:51. The Lord Jesus Himself is the way God has appointed between earth and heaven – John 14:6; Heb 10:19-22. And He is the one and only Mediator between God and men – 1 Tim 2:5.

28:13 Jacob is fearful and fleeing for his life to another country. God in mercy confirms to him the covenant and promises made to Abraham.

all the families of the earth will be blessed. ¹⁵And, see, I *am* with you and will keep you in every place you go, and will bring you again into this land. For I will not leave you until I have done what I have spoken to you about”.

¹⁶And Jacob awoke from his sleep, and he said, “Surely the LORD is in this place, and I did not know *it*”. ¹⁷And he was afraid, and said, “How awe-inspiring *is* this place! This *is* nothing else than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven”.

¹⁸And Jacob got up early in the morning, took the stone that he had put for his pillow, set it up as a pillar, and poured oil on the top of it. ¹⁹And he called the name of that place Beth-El, but at first the name of that city was called Luz.

²⁰And Jacob make a vow, saying, “If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I am going, and will give me bread to eat, and clothes to wear, ²¹so that I return to my father’s house in peace, then the LORD will be my God, ²²and this stone, which I have set up as a pillar, will become God’s house. And I will surely give you a tenth of all that you give me”.

29 Then Jacob went on his journey, and came to the land of the people of the east. ²And he looked, and saw a well in the field, and there *were* three flocks of sheep lying by it, for they watered the flocks from that well. And a large stone was on the well’s

mouth. ³All the flocks would be gathered there, and *then* they would roll the stone from the well’s mouth, water the sheep, and put the stone again in its place on the well’s mouth.

⁴And Jacob said to them, “My brothers, where *are* you from?” And they said, “We *are* from Haran”. ⁵And he said to them, “Do you know Laban the son of Nahor?” And they said, “We know him”.

⁶And he said to them, “Is he well?” And they said, “*He is* well. And, look, his daughter Rachel is coming with the sheep”.

⁷And he said, “Look, *it is* still broad day, *and* not time for the cattle to be gathered together. Water the sheep, and go and feed *them*”.

⁸And they said, “We cannot until all the flocks are gathered together, and until they roll the stone from the well’s mouth. Then we will water the sheep”.

⁹And while he was still speaking with them, Rachel came with her father’s sheep, for she tended them. ¹⁰And it came about when Jacob saw Rachel the daughter of Laban his mother’s brother, and the sheep of Laban his mother’s brother, that Jacob went near and rolled the stone from the well’s mouth and watered the flock of Laban his mother’s brother. ¹¹And Jacob kissed Rachel, and raised his voice and wept. ¹²And Jacob told Rachel that he was her father’s relative, and that he *was* Rebekah’s son. And she ran and told her father.

28:14 “*Blessed*”– 12:2-3; John 4:22; Isa 2:3; Rom 9:4-5.

28:15 “*With you*”– references at 21:22.

“*Keep you*”– Num 6:24; 1 Sam 2:9; Ps 121:4-5,7; John 10:28; 17:12,15; 2 Tim 1:12; 1 Pet 1:5; Jude 24.

28:16-17 Jacob was right. The true God is awe-inspiring, and wherever He appears is a holy place. And all men should learn to fear Him. Compare Ex 3:4-6; 19:20-21; Deut 28:58; Josh 5:13-15; Ps 33:8; 68:35.

28:18 “*Pillar*”– this was a memorial pillar, not a thing to worship. He poured oil on it to dedicate the place to the true God.

28:19 Bethel means “house of God”. It became one of the important places in the Old Testament (12:8; 35:1; Jud 1:22; 1 Kings 12:28; 2 Kings 2:2-3; 17:28; 23:15), mentioned about 70 times.

28:20 Jacob’s faith, though real, was not strong. He puts an “if” when God had not put one. God’s promise was not based on conditions. But Jacob seems to be trying to bargain with God in vs 21,22. In v 15 God said “I am with you, I will watch over you, I will bring you back”. He did not say, “If you are good, and if you give me a tenth,

and if you make Bethel a special place, I will be with you”. When faced with God’s promises let us be careful not to think as Jacob did here. But we see in Jacob’s life that God deals lovingly and tenderly with weak believers. Compare Ps 103:13-14; Matt 6:30; 8:26.

28:21 “*My God*”– he would take Jehovah as his personal God and worship and serve Him – “if”. But we should all believe, worship and serve Jehovah without any “ifs” whatever, simply because He is the one and only true God.

28:22 “*Tenth*”– 14:20; Lev 27:30; Num 18:21; Deut 14:22; Mal 3:8. A tenth of one’s income was the bare minimum God wanted from His people. But God did not mention it to Jacob as a condition of the fulfillment of His promises.

29:1 “*People of the east*”– northeast of Canaan.

29:5 “*Nahor*”– 11:27-29.

29:12 “*Father’s relative*”– the KJV has “brother”, but Jacob was Laban’s nephew. This is an illustration that a too literal translation of a Hebrew word or phrase sometimes can be misleading. In Hebrew the words brother, father, son, etc. have a wide range of meaning.

¹³And it came about when Laban heard the news about Jacob his sister's son, that he ran to meet him, and embraced him, and kissed him, and brought him to his house. And he told Laban all these things. ¹⁴And Laban said to him, "You really are my bone and my flesh". And he stayed with him for a month.

¹⁵And Laban said to Jacob, "Because you are my relative should you then serve me for nothing? Tell me what your wages *will be*".

¹⁶And Laban had two daughters; the name of the older was Leah, and the name of the younger was Rachel. ¹⁷Leah was tender eyed, but Rachel was beautiful and pleasing in appearance. ¹⁸And Jacob loved Rachel, and said, "I will serve you seven years for Rachel your younger daughter".

¹⁹And Laban said, "It is better that I give her to you, than to give her to another man. Stay with me". ²⁰And Jacob served seven years for Rachel and they seemed to him *but* a few days, because of the love he had for her.

²¹And Jacob said to Laban, "My time is fulfilled. Give me my wife so that I may go to her".

²²And Laban gathered together all the men of the place, and made a feast. ²³And it came about that in the evening he took Leah his daughter, and brought her to him, and *he* went in with her. ²⁴And Laban gave his maid Zilpah to his daughter Leah as a maid servant.

²⁵And it came about that in the morning, *lo and behold*, it was Leah. And he said to Laban, "What is this you have done to me? Did I not serve with you for Rachel? Why

then have you deceived me?"

²⁶And Laban said, "Giving the younger before the firstborn is not done in our country. ²⁷Fulfil her *bridal week*, and we will give you this *one* also for the service which you will give me for still another seven years".

²⁸And Jacob did so. He fulfilled her week, and Laban gave him Rachel his daughter also as *his* wife. ²⁹And Laban gave his maid servant Bilhah to his daughter Rachel to be her maid. ³⁰And *Jacob* went in also to Rachel, and he also loved Rachel more than Leah, and served with him still another seven years.

³¹And when the LORD saw that Leah was hated, he opened her womb. But Rachel was barren. ³²And Leah conceived, and gave birth to a son, and she called his name Reuben. For she said, "Surely the LORD has looked on my misery. So now my husband will love me".

³³And she conceived again, and gave birth to a son, and said, "Because the LORD heard that I was hated, he has given me this *son* also". And she called his name Simeon.

³⁴And she conceived again, and gave birth to a son and said, "Now this time my husband will become united to me, because I have borne him three sons". Therefore his name was called Levi.

³⁵And she conceived again, and gave birth to a son, and she said, "Now I will praise the LORD". Therefore she called his name Judah. And she stopped bearing *children*.

30 And when Rachel saw that she bore Jacob no children, Rachel envied her

29:15 Laban seemed to be loving and generous, but his true character was something else, as is later revealed. How often men seem to be one thing and later prove to be the opposite.

29:18 It was the custom in those days, in that part of the world, for the men to pay a dowry for brides – the opposite of India's custom (24:53; Ex 22:16-17; Deut 22:28-29).

29:25 "Deceived" – 25:26; 27:35-36; Gal 6:7; Prov 22:8; Ps 18:25-26. They who deceive others should not be surprised if others deceive them. It is no strange thing for men to be paid back in their own coin. Those who will not live according to the principle of Matt 7:12 will find many thorns in their paths.

29:27 See 31:41.

29:28 Polygamy was not ordained by God – 2:23-24.

29:31-32 God loves the unloved and unlovable. He sees their loneliness and sorrow and He cares.

Leah became the mother of two of the greatest tribes in Israel – Levi and Judah – and one of the ancestors of King David and the Lord Jesus. Reuben means "see, a son!"

29:33 Simeon means "heard" or "hearing".

29:34 "Now" – evidently, up until this time, Jacob had not shown her the affection she craved. Levi means "joined".

29:35 Leah does not mention her husband this time. Perhaps she was beginning to accept the fact that he would never really love her, and sought to find her joy in her children, and (who knows?) in God. Judah sounds like the Hebrew word for praise and may mean "praise" or "let Him (God) be praised".

30:1 Though some Old Testament people of God had more than one wife at a time this was not God's instruction to them or to anyone. God's appointed way was one man, one wife (2:21-24; Matt 19:1-9). In this chapter we will see that

sister, and said to Jacob, “Give me children, or else I’ll die”.

²And Jacob’s anger was aroused against Rachel and he said, “Am I in the place of God, who has withheld from you the fruit of the womb?”

³And she said, “See my maid Bilhah, go to her. She will bear a *child* on my knees, so that I may also have children through her”.

⁴And she gave him Bilhah her maid servant as a wife, and Jacob went to her. ⁵And Bilhah conceived and bore Jacob a son. ⁶And Rachel said, “God has given judgment *for* me, and has also heard my voice and given me a son”. Therefore she called his name Dan.

⁷And Rachel’s maid Bilhah conceived again and bore Jacob a second son. ⁸And Rachel said, “I have struggled with my sister with great struggles, *and* I have won”. And she called his name Naphtali.

⁹When Leah saw that she had stopped bearing *children*, she took her maid Zilpah and gave her to Jacob as a wife. ¹⁰And Leah’s maid Zilpah bore Jacob a son. ¹¹And Leah said, “A troop is coming”. And she called his name Gad.

¹²And Leah’s maid Zilpah bore Jacob a second son. ¹³And Leah said, “I am happy, for the daughters will call me blessed”. And she called his name Asher.

¹⁴At the time of the wheat harvest, Reuben went and found mandrakes in the field and brought them to his mother Leah. Then

Rachel said to Leah, “Please give me *some* of your son’s mandrakes”.

¹⁵And she said to her, “*Is it* a small matter that you have taken my husband? And would you take away my son’s mandrakes also?” And Rachel said, “Therefore he will lie with you tonight for your son’s mandrakes”.

¹⁶And Jacob came from the field in the evening, and Leah went out to meet him and said, “You must come to me, for I have certainly hired you with my son’s mandrakes”. And he lay with her that night.

¹⁷And God listened to Leah and she conceived and bore Jacob a fifth son. ¹⁸And Leah said, “God has given me my wages because I have given my maid servant to my husband”. And she called his name Issachar.

¹⁹And Leah conceived again and bore Jacob a sixth son. ²⁰And Leah said, “God has granted me a good gift. Now my husband will stay with me, because I have borne him six sons”. And she called his name Zebulun.

²¹And afterwards she bore a daughter, and called her name Dinah.

²²And God remembered Rachel, and God listened to her, and opened her womb. ²³And she conceived and bore a son and said, “God has taken away my reproach”. ²⁴And she called his name Joseph, saying, “The LORD will add to me another son”.

²⁵And it came about, when Rachel had given birth to Joseph, that Jacob said to Laban, “Send me away, so that I may go to my own place and to my country. ²⁶Give me

multiple wives meant multiple troubles. In verse 1 there is envy, in verse 2 anger, in verses 3,4 carnal thinking, in verse 8 strife, in verses 14-16 ignorant quarreling. Jacob’s example is not good but bad. And the Bible records bad example, not that we might follow it, but that we might avoid it. In the following verses we see again the sad condition of the human heart. All are sinners, all fail in many ways to live up to God’s standards. The Bible tells things as they are, not as we might vainly imagine them to be. People who obtain salvation do so by the grace of God, not by their own supposed goodness.

30:2 See 20:18; Ps 113:9; 127:3.

30:3 Verse 9; 16:2. Again we see the desperation women felt in ancient times to have children and a family.

30:6 Dan means “He judged”, or “He vindicated”.

30:8 Naphtali means “my struggle”.

30:13 “*I am happy*”—compare 29:32. God enabled her to come from misery to happiness. God delights to do this. Compare Isa 61:3. Asher means “happy” or “blessed”.

30:14 “*Mandrakes*”—a plant which they mistakenly thought produced fertility in women, if eaten.

30:17 It was God’s grace, not eating mandrakes, that gave another son to Leah.

30:18 “*Maid servant*”—Leah was altogether mistaken about the reason God gave her another son. Issachar sounds like the Hebrew word for reward. It may mean “man of hire”, or “there is a reward”.

30:20 Leah no longer speaks of her husband loving her (29:32,34). But she did not give up hope that he would at least show her some respect. Zebulun may mean “dwelling” or “honor” or “exalted”.

30:21 Dinah means “judgment”.

30:22 See 8:1.

30:23 “*Reproach*”—she considered it a disgrace not to have children – compare 1 Sam 1:2,7; Luke 1:25. But of course it was not. It was simply God’s will for her until God later decided to give her children. God’s will for us is never a reproach if we believe Him and serve Him (Rom 12:1-2).

30:24 Joseph means “increase”, or “may He add”. Compare Prov 30:15-16.

my wives and my children, for whom I have served you, and let me go. For you know my service which I have rendered you”.

²⁷And Laban said to him, “Please, if I have found favour in your eyes, *stay here*. I have learned by experience that the LORD has blessed me on your account”. ²⁸And he said, “Tell me your wages, and I will pay *them*”.

²⁹And he said to him, “You know how I have served you, and how your cattle was with me. ³⁰For you *had* little before I *came*, and it is *now* increased enormously. And the LORD has blessed you since my coming. But now when shall I provide for my own house also?”

³¹And he said, “What shall I give you?” And Jacob said, “You shall not give me anything. If you will do this thing for me, I will again feed and keep your flock: ³²I will go through your whole flock today, removing from it all the speckled and spotted sheep, and all the dark-coloured ones among the lambs, and the spotted and speckled among the goats, and *these* will be my wages. ³³So my righteousness will testify for me in the coming days, when you come concerning my wages: among the goats every one with me that *is* not speckled and spotted, and dark-coloured among the lambs, that will be counted as stolen”.

³⁴And Laban said, “Right. Let it be according to your word”. ³⁵And that *very* day he removed the male goats that were streaked and spotted, and all the female goats that were speckled and spotted, and every one that had *some* white in it, and all the dark-coloured ones among the lambs, and gave *them* into the hand of his sons. ³⁶And he put a three-days journey between himself and Jacob. And Jacob tended the rest of Laban’s flocks.

³⁷Then Jacob took fresh rods of poplar, almond and plane trees, and peeled them in

white strips, making the white in the rods appear. ³⁸And he set the rods which he had peeled in front of the flocks in the channels in the watering troughs, when the flocks came to drink. And they mated when they came to drink. ³⁹So the flocks mated in front of the rods and they bore streaked, speckled and spotted *young*. ⁴⁰And Jacob separated the lambs, and made the flocks face toward all the streaked and dark-coloured *ones* in the flock of Laban. And he put his own flocks by themselves and did not put them among the flocks belonging to Laban. ⁴¹And it came about that whenever the stronger *ones of the* flock mated, Jacob placed the rods in front of the eyes of the flock in the *water* channels, so that they might mate near the rods. ⁴²But he did not place *the rods* there if the *animals in the* flock were weak. So the weaker ones were Laban’s, and the stronger Jacob’s. ⁴³And the man greatly increased *in wealth*, and had many flocks, female servants, male servants, camels and donkeys.

31 And he heard the words of Laban’s sons, saying, “Jacob has taken away all that belonged to our father, and he has gained all this wealth from that which was our father’s”. ²And Jacob looked at the face of Laban, and now it was not *friendly* toward him as before.

³And the LORD said to Jacob, “Return to the land of your fathers, and to your relatives, and I will be with you”.

⁴And Jacob sent and called Rachel and Leah to the field to his flock, ⁵and he said to them, “I see *from* your father’s face that he *is* not *friendly* toward me as before, but the God of my father has been with me. ⁶And you know that I have served your father with all my strength. ⁷And your father has deceived me, and changed my wages ten times. But God did not permit him to harm me. ⁸If he

30:27 “*On your account*”— 21:22; 26:24; 39:3-4; Isa 61:9.

30:35-36 Jacob deceived his brother and his father; his father-in-law deceived him. If he could have managed it he would not have left Jacob a single sheep or goat as his own.

30:37-43 Jacob thought he knew a few tricks himself. Actually the rods placed before the mating sheep and goats had absolutely nothing to do with the kind of offspring they produced. The reason why more striped, speckled and spotted offspring were produced is given in 31:11-12. It was God’s grace working through natural processes

and not Jacob’s tricks that made the difference.

31:3 “*With you*”— 28:15.

31:5 Verse 42; 30:30. Jacob acknowledges that God has been with him, but still does not say “my God” (27:20).

31:7 “*Ten times*”— it seems that Laban had deceived and cheated Jacob more times than the two recorded instances.

“*Harm me*”— compare 50:20; Num 23:8; Job 1:10; Ps 105:15; 115:9; Heb 13:6; 1 Pet 3:13. No one can harm the child of God unless God permits it. And if God permits it, it will be for his good. Read and believe Rom 8:28.

said: 'The speckled ones will be your wages', then all the flocks bore speckled ones; and if he said: 'The streaked ones will be your wages', then all the animals in the flock bore streaked ones. ⁹So God has taken away the flocks of your father and given them to me.

¹⁰"And it so happened at the mating season of the flock that in a dream I raised my eyes and saw that the rams which were mating were streaked, speckled, and spotted. ¹¹And the angel of God said to me in the dream, 'Jacob', and I said, 'Here I am.' ¹²And he said, 'Raise your eyes and look. All the rams which mate with the flock are streaked, speckled, and spotted, for I have seen all that Laban is doing to you. ¹³I am the God of Bethel, where you anointed the pillar and where you made a vow to me. Now get up and go away from this land, and return to the land of your relatives.' "

¹⁴And Rachel and Leah answered and said to him, "Is there still any share or inheritance for us in our father's house? ¹⁵Are we not counted by him as foreigners? For he has sold us and also has entirely eaten up our money. ¹⁶For all the riches which God has taken from our father is ours, and our children's. Now then, do whatever God has told you".

¹⁷Then Jacob rose up, and put his sons and his wives on camels, ¹⁸and took away all his livestock, and all his goods which he had accumulated, his acquired livestock which he had accumulated in Padan-Aram, to go to Isaac his father in the land of Canaan.

¹⁹And Laban went to shear his sheep. And Rachel stole her father's household gods.

31:9 Jacob acknowledges that it was God who did this and not his tricks – 30:37-43.

31:10 "Dream" – v 24. Notes on dreams at 15:12; Num 12:6; Deut 13:1.

31:13 "I am the God" – here the angel of God (v 11) says He is God.

"Angel of God" – note at 16:7.

"Bethel" – 28:19.

31:15 See 29:20,23,27.

31:19 Though Laban knew of the one true God (v 53), and knew that it was He who had blessed them (30:27), he still foolishly kept idols in his house and called them his gods (v 30). Sadder still is the fact that Rachel wanted them so badly she was willing to steal them. Had Jacob been so busy gaining wealth that he had not taken time to instruct his beloved wife in the truth of God? Would he have even desired to do so (compare 35:2)? We cannot be sure. Sometimes people reject instruction even when it is given. Perhaps Jacob told

²⁰And Jacob deceived Laban the Syrian, by not telling him that he was running away.

²¹So he fled with all that he had. And he got up and crossed over the river, and set his face toward Mount Gilead.

²²And on the third day Laban was told that Jacob had run away. ²³And he took his brothers with him, and pursued him a seven-days' journey, and they caught up to him in Mount Gilead. ²⁴And God came to Laban the Syrian in a dream at night, and said to him, "Watch out that you do not say anything to Jacob, either good or bad".

²⁵Then Laban caught up to Jacob. Now Jacob had pitched his tent on the mountain. And Laban, with his brothers, also pitched on the mountain of Gilead. ²⁶And Laban said to Jacob, "What have you done by deceiving me, and carrying away my daughters like captives taken by the sword? ²⁷Why did you run away secretly and deceive me? You did not tell me so that I could send you away with joy and with songs, with tambourines and with harp. ²⁸And you have not allowed me to kiss my sons and my daughters. You have now acted foolishly in doing so. ²⁹It is in the power of my hand to harm you, but the God of your father spoke to me yesterday night, saying, 'Watch out that you do not say anything to Jacob, either good or bad.'

³⁰And now you have certainly gone away, because you were longing for your father's house. Still, why have you stolen my gods?"

³¹And Jacob answered and said to Laban, "I was afraid, because I said, 'Perhaps you would take your daughters from me by force.'

Rachel the truth about God and idols and she did not believe it.

31:20 "Deceived" – 25:26; 27:35-36; Jer 13:23; 17:9.

31:21 "River" – Euphrates River.

"Gilead" – territory bordering on Canaan to the east.

31:24 "Dream" – v 11.

31:26-27 Why should people who deceive others be surprised when others deceive them? Note at 29:25.

31:29 "Harm" – in this Laban was mistaken. Note at v 7. Compare John 19:10-11.

31:30 Verse 19; Josh 24:2. Of what value are gods which can be stolen? Jud 6:30-31; Ps 115:3-8; Isa 42:17; 44:12-20.

31:31 "Afraid" – Jacob had learned enough of Laban's deceitful nature to be afraid of what he might do. He should have been afraid of his own nature also. We should be more afraid of the defects in our own characters than those in other people.

³²Whoever you find your gods with, let him not live. In the presence of our relatives see anything that is yours with me, and take it". For Jacob did not know that Rachel had stolen them.

³³And Laban went into Jacob's tent, and into Leah's tent, and into the tents of the two maid servants, but he did not find *them*. Then he went out of Leah's tent, and entered Rachel's tent. ³⁴Now Rachel had taken the idols and put them in the camel's saddle, and had sat down on them. And Laban searched the whole tent but did not find *them*.

³⁵And she said to her father, "Do not be angry, my lord, because I cannot rise in your presence, for the way *it gets* with women is now with me". And he searched, but did not find the idols.

³⁶And Jacob became angry and contended with Laban. And Jacob answered and said to Laban, "What is my crime, what is my sin, that you have so hotly pursued me? ³⁷Now that you have searched all my things, what have you found of all your household things? Put *it* here before my family members and your family members, so that they may judge between the two of us.

³⁸"These twenty years I *have been* with you. Your ewes and your female goats have not miscarried, and I have not eaten the rams of your flock. ³⁹I did not bring to you those which were torn by beasts; I bore the loss of it. You demanded from me what was stolen either by day or by night. ⁴⁰*This is how* I was: in the day the heat consumed me, and the frost at night, and my sleep fled from my eyes. ⁴¹Now I have been in your house for twenty years. I served you fourteen years for your two daughters, and six years for your livestock, and you changed my wages ten times. ⁴²Unless the God of my father,

the God of Abraham, and the Fear of Isaac, had been with me, surely you would now have sent me away empty-handed. God saw my misery and the labour of my hands, and rebuked *you yesterday night*".

⁴³And Laban answered and said to Jacob, "*These daughters are my daughters, and these children are my children, and these flocks are my flocks, and all that you see is mine. But what can I do today about these daughters of mine, or about their children whom they have borne?*" ⁴⁴So now come on, let us make a covenant, I and you, and let it be as a witness between me and you".

⁴⁵And Jacob took a stone and set it up as a pillar. ⁴⁶And Jacob said to his relatives, "Gather *some stones*", and they took stones and made a heap. And they ate there by the heap *of stones*. ⁴⁷And Laban called it Jegar Sahadutha, but Jacob called it Galeed.

⁴⁸And Laban said, "Today this heap is a witness between me and you". Therefore its name was called Galeed, ⁴⁹and Mizpah. For he said, "The LORD watch between me and you, while we are absent from one another. ⁵⁰If you mistreat my daughters, or if you take *other wives besides my daughters, even though no man is with us, see, God is a witness between me and you*".

⁵¹And Laban said to Jacob, "Look at this heap and look at *this pillar*, which I have set up between me and you. ⁵²*May this heap be a witness, and this pillar be a witness, that I will not cross over this heap to you, and that you will not cross over this heap and this pillar to me, for harm.*" ⁵³The God of Abraham, the God of Nahor, the God of their father, judge between us". And Jacob gave an oath by the Fear of his father Isaac. ⁵⁴Then Jacob offered a sacrifice on the

31:35 Rachel also did not mind practicing deceit. It seemed that none of them realized that families and peoples who practice lying and deceiving will experience all kinds of troubles and difficulties.

31:37 "*Family members*"—KJV has "brothers", but here the Hebrew word obviously means "relatives" or "family members". See note at 29:12.

31:41 "*Ten times*"—v 7.

31:42 "*Fear of Isaac*"—this means the God whom Isaac feared—the true God.

31:44 See 21:27,32; 26:28; Josh 24:27.

31:45 "*Pillar*"—28:18.

31:47 Both Jegar Sahadutha and Galeed mean "witness heap".

31:49 Mizpah means "watchtower".

31:50 "*God is a witness*"—Jud 11:10; Ps 139:3,7-12; Jer 42:5; Micah 1:2; Mal 2:14; 3:5; 1 Thess 2:10; Heb 4:13.

31:53 If Laban had the one true God he had no need for household gods (v 30). But he, like Jacob, spoke of God as being someone else's God, not his own. Happy are those who can truly claim God as their own (Ps 3:7; 5:2; 7:1; 23:1; Dan 9:19; John 20:28; Phil 4:19).

31:54 "*Sacrifice*"—for the first time we read of Jacob offering a sacrifice to God. It seems it took Jacob a long time to understand and practice certain basic matters related to a walk with God. His sacrifice here may be in fulfillment of his vow to take Jehovah as his God, if Jehovah did as He said He would do (28:21).

mountain, and called his relatives to eat a meal. And they ate the meal, and spent all night on the mountain.

⁵⁵And early in the morning Laban got up, and kissed his grandsons and his daughters, and blessed them. Then Laban left and returned to his place.

32 And Jacob went on his way, and the angels of God met him. ²And when Jacob saw them, he said, “This is God’s host”, and he called the name of that place Mahanaim.

³And Jacob sent messengers before him to Esau his brother to the land of Seir, the country of Edom. ⁴And he commanded them, saying, “Speak to my master Esau like this: ‘Your servant Jacob says this, I have been staying with Laban, and remained there until now. ⁵And I have oxen and donkeys, flocks, and male servants, and female servants. Now I have sent *men* to tell my master *this*, so that I may find favour in your sight.’ ”

⁶And the messengers returned to Jacob, saying, “We went to your brother Esau, and he is also coming to meet you, and four hundred men with him”.

⁷Then Jacob was greatly afraid and distressed. And he divided the people with him, and the flocks, herds and camels, into two groups, ⁸and said, “If Esau comes to

the one group and attacks it, then the group which is left will escape”.

⁹And Jacob said, “O God of my father Abraham, God of my father Isaac, the LORD who said to me, ‘Return to your country, and to your relatives, and I will prosper you’, ¹⁰I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies and all the faithfulness which you have showed to your servant. For with my staff I passed over this Jordan, and now I have become two groups. ¹¹Rescue me, I pray, from the hand of my brother, the hand of Esau, for I am afraid that he will come *and* attack me, and the mother with the children. ¹²And you said, ‘I will surely make you prosper, and make your offspring like the sand of the sea, which is so much that it cannot be numbered.’ ”

¹³And he stayed there that night, and from what he had with him he took a present for his brother Esau: ¹⁴two hundred female goats, twenty male goats, two hundred ewes, twenty rams, ¹⁵thirty camels *giving* milk, together with their young, forty cows, ten bulls, twenty female donkeys, and ten foals. ¹⁶And he put *them* in the hands of his servants, each drove by itself, and said to his servants, “Go on ahead of me and put a space between drove and drove”.

¹⁷And he commanded the one in the front, saying, “When my brother Esau meets you, and speaks and asks, ‘To whom do you

“*Eat a meal*”– literally, “eat bread”, but the meaning is that they ate a meal together. This is one of the ways the Hebrews expressed that. Here we have another illustration of the truth that a too literal translation may be misleading. **31:55** “*Kissed his grandsons*”– KJV has “sons” here, but Laban had no sons there. He kissed the children of his daughters. In Hebrew words like “son” or “brother” have a much wider range of meaning than they do in English.

So Jacob parts from Laban after 20 years. He has gotten four wives, twelve children (Benjamin was born later) and great flocks. In spite of many troubles and afflictions, failings and faults, he continued to believe in God. God did not approve of many of his actions but was merciful to him and brought him safely back to his own land, as He had promised in 28:15. God proved Himself again to be a faithful, loving God. See Ex 34:6-7; Ps 86:15; 103:8-14; 108:4; 145:8; Joel 2:12-13; Micah 7:18-20; Rom 2:4.

32:1 “*Angels*”– 16:7; 2 Kings 6:15-17; Ps 34:7; 91:11; Heb 1:13-14.

32:2 Mahanaim means two camps or companies. Jacob received assurance that God’s hosts were

camped with his camp.

32:3 “*Esau*”– Jacob feared that Esau would seek revenge for stealing his blessing and birthright – vs 7,8; 27:36,41,42.

“*Edom*”– 25:30. The country of Edom was south of the Dead Sea, far from where Jacob then was.

32:4 Notice how he calls Esau “master” and himself “servant”, showing his willingness to submit to Esau (at least in word) for the sake of peace.

32:9 “*Return*”– 31:3.

32:10-12 Jacob is conscious of his sins and errors and realizes to some extent that his safety and prosperity depend on the grace of God. He does not plead his own goodness but the promises and faithfulness of God who had promised him good things – 28:13-15. Now Jacob does not try to bargain with God as he did then. Surely this was a spiritual step upward.

32:13-21 Even after looking to God for safety he made his own plans to pacify Esau. Did he think God might fail him? Compare him with a man of more faith in God’s protection – Ezra 8:21-23.

belong?', and, 'Where are you going?' and, 'Who owns these herds in front of you?'
 18 Then you shall say, 'They belong to your servant Jacob. It is a present sent to my master Esau. And look, he is also behind us.' "

19 And he gave the same command to the second, and to the third, and to all who followed the droves, saying, "This is the way you must speak to Esau when you meet him. 20 And say also, 'Look, your servant Jacob is behind us.' " For he said, "I will appease him with the present that goes before me, and when I see his face, perhaps he will receive me". 21 So the present went on before him, and he himself stayed that night in the camp.

22 And he got up that night, and took his two wives, and his two female servants, and his eleven sons, and crossed over the ford Jabbok. 23 After he took them and brought them over the brook, he sent over his possessions. 24 And Jacob was left alone. And a man wrestled with him until daybreak. 25 And when he saw that he was not overpowering Jacob, he touched the hollow of his thigh, and the

hollow of Jacob's thigh became out of joint, as he wrestled with him. 26 And he said, "Let me go, for it is daybreak". And Jacob said, "I will not let you go unless you bless me".

27 And he said to him, "What is your name?" And he said, "Jacob".

28 And he said, "Your name will no longer be called Jacob, but Israel; for as a prince you have power with God and with men, and have prevailed".

29 And Jacob asked him, saying, "Please tell me your name". And he said, "Why is it that you are asking about my name?" And he blessed him there.

30 And Jacob called the name of the place Peniel, saying, "For I saw God face to face, and my life was preserved".

31 And as he passed by Peniel the sun rose on him, and he limped on his thigh. 32 Therefore, to this day, the children of Israel do not eat the sinew which shrank, which is on the hollow of the thigh; because he touched the hollow of Jacob's thigh on the sinew that shrank.

32:22 "Jabbok"— a stream that flows from the east into the Jordan some 30 kilometers north of the Dead Sea.

32:24 "Man"— an angel in the form of a man – the Messenger of the Lord, the Son of God Himself? We are not sure. (vs 28,30; Hos 12:3-5). Note at 16:7. Certainly, something more than just a physical wrestling seems to be involved, because Jacob clung fast to his opponent until he obtained a blessing. Jacob recognized he had continued to combat God, but now he recognized his dependence, his need for grace and clings to him for a blessing.

"Daybreak"— this wrestling was surely more than physical. Jacob could not have wrestled physically for a whole night. Anyway the angel had more important matters in mind – matters of the spirit, mind, and will of Jacob.

32:25 "Was not overpowering"— was this mighty angel unable to overcome a man? See Isa 37:36. The body he could easily overcome. It was Jacob's will and nature that would not be overpowered. With his thigh out of joint Jacob could wrestle no more, but only cling to the Messenger with profound determination. Then he prevailed. Compare Luke 11:5-10; 18:1.

32:26 "Let me go"— could not God leave a man if He wished? But the Omnipotent One was willingly held fast by determined faith. Compare Ex 32:10; Luke 24:28-29.

"Bless me"— did Jacob fully realize who it was he held in his arms?

32:27 For blessing to come to Jacob now he had

to face himself and acknowledge what he was (25:26; 27:36). "Name" meant his nature and character.

32:28 "Jacob"— that night God was made a deep change in him. It is only God who can do this – and He accomplishes it even when we 'wrestle' with Him. Jacob was not free of his sinful nature until death, but his dependence on deceitful tricks, his confidence in himself were shattered. It is true that Jacob overcame that night, but so did the angel. In that wrestling match both parties won.

"Israel"— means literally "he strives with God", or possibly, "a prince with God".

"Have prevailed"— compare Matt 11:12. God wants us to deeply desire Him, and earnestly seek Him and His blessings and His kingdom (2 Chron 15:4,15; Ps 42:1-2; Jer 29:12-13; Matt 6:33; Rom 2:6-7; Heb 4:11). We will have them when we have the same faith in God and determination Jacob had, and when we face ourselves and our sinfulness as he did.

32:29 "Name"— Jud 13:17-18; Isa 9:6.

"Blessed him"— Jacob received exactly what he wanted (v 26). Compare Matt 7:9-12.

32:30 Peniel means "God's face". See also 16:13; Jud 6:22-23; 13:22. They saw God in angelic or human form, not in His glorious spirit nature – 2:19; Ex 33:18-23; John 1:18; 1 Tim 6:15-16.

32:31 The limp was a constant reminder of his own weakness and God's grace. Something similar is seen in 2 Cor 12:7-10. Really meeting God can never leave men the same as they were.

33 And Jacob raised his eyes, and looked, and, there came Esau, and with him four hundred men. And *Jacob* divided the children between Leah and Rachel and the two maid servants. ²And he put the maid servants and their children in the front, and Leah and her children after *them*, and Rachel and Joseph last. ³And he went on ahead of them, and bowed down to the ground seven times, until he came near to his brother.

⁴And Esau ran to meet him, embraced him, fell on his neck, and kissed him. And they wept. ⁵And *Esau* raised his eyes and saw the women and the children, and said, “Who *are* these with you?” And he said, “The children whom God has graciously given your servant”.

⁶Then the maid servants approached *Esau*, they and their children, and they bowed down. ⁷And Leah also, with her children came near, and bowed down. And after *them* Joseph and Rachel came near and they bowed down.

⁸And he said, “What *do* you *mean* by this whole drove that I met?” And he said, “*Those are* to find favour in the sight of my master”.

⁹And Esau said, “I have enough, my brother. Keep what you have for yourself”.

¹⁰And Jacob said, “Please, no. If I have now found favour in your sight, then receive my present from my hand. For I see your face, as though seeing the face of God, and you were pleased with me. ¹¹Please accept my gift that is brought to you, because God has dealt graciously with me and so I have enough”. And he urged him, and he accepted *it*.

¹²And *Esau* said, “Let us set out on our

journey, and move on, and I will go ahead of you”.

¹³And he said to him, “My master knows that the children *are* tender, and the flocks and herds with young *are* with me. If they drive them too hard one day, the whole flock will die. ¹⁴Please let my master go on ahead of his servant, and I will lead on slowly, as much as the livestock going in front of me and the children are able to bear, until I come to my master in Seir”.

¹⁵And Esau said, “Then let me leave with you *some* of the people who *are* with me”. And he said, “What is the need? Let me find favour in the sight of my master”.

¹⁶So Esau went back that day on his way to Seir. ¹⁷And Jacob journeyed to Succoth and built a house for himself, and made booths for his cattle. Therefore the name of the place is called Succoth. ¹⁸And after coming from Padan-Aram, Jacob came to Shelem, a city of Shechem, which *is* in the land of Canaan, and pitched his tent before the city. ¹⁹And he bought a part of the field where he had spread his tent, from the hand of the children of Hamor, Shechem’s father, for a hundred pieces of money. ²⁰And he erected an altar there, and called it El Elohe Israel.

34 And Dinah the daughter of Leah, which she bore to Jacob, went out to see the daughters of the land. ²And when Shechem the son of Hamor the Hivite, prince of that region, saw her, he took her, lay with her and defiled her. ³And his soul was united to Dinah the daughter of Jacob, and he loved the girl and spoke kindly to the girl. ⁴And Shechem spoke to his father Hamor, saying,

33:2 “*Last*”— to keep those he loved the best in the safest position (29:30; 37:3).

33:3 “*Seven times*”— a picture of humility and total submission to Esau.

33:4 “*Kissed him*”— compare Prov 16:7. While God had been working with and in Jacob He had also been at work in Esau. God was answering Jacob’s prayer of 32:11. God can turn even the hearts of kings the way He wishes – Prov 21:1.

33:9 Esau showed more kindness and generosity to Jacob than Jacob had to him (25:29-33; 27:36) This does not necessarily mean that Esau had by faith taken the one true God as his God.

33:14-18 Jacob had no intention of going to Seir (Edom) where Esau lived. This whole passage shows that he was still uneasy about Esau. It shows too that Israel had not completely lost

his Jacob nature overnight. Succoth was a long way from Seir and in a different direction. And Shechem was straight west in Canaan and not south toward Seir.

33:17 “*Succoth*”— this means “shelters”.

33:20 “*Altar*”— 8:20; 12:7-8; 13:18; 22:9. El Elohe Israel means “God, the God of Israel” or, possibly, “Mighty is the God of Israel”. Previously Jacob had spoken of “the God of my father” and “the God of Abraham” (31:5,42; 32:9). Now Jacob speaks of Him as his own God and so fulfills the vow he made in 28:1.

34:1 See 30:21.

34:2 The Hivites were a people who were in the land of Canaan before Abraham arrived there. Besides Shechem they lived in Gibeon (Joshua chapter 9), and near Mount Hermon (Josh 11:3).

“Get me this girl for my wife”.

⁵And Jacob heard that he had defiled his daughter Dinah. Now his sons were with his livestock in the field, and Jacob kept silent until they had come.

⁶And Hamor the father of Shechem went out to Jacob to talk with him. ⁷And when they heard *this*, the sons of Jacob came from the field, and the men were sad and very angry, because in lying with Jacob’s daughter he had done a disgraceful thing in Israel, a thing which ought not to be done.

⁸And Hamor talked with them, saying, “The soul of my son Shechem longs for your daughter. Please give her to him as *his* wife. ⁹And intermarry with us; give your daughters to us, and take our daughters for yourselves. ¹⁰And you will live with us, and the land will be before you. Live and do business in it, and get possessions for yourselves in it”.

¹¹And Shechem said to her father and her brothers, “Let me find favour in your eyes, and whatever you say to me I will give. ¹²Ask me any amount of dowry and gift, and I will give according to what you say to me. But give me the girl as *my* wife”.

¹³And the sons of Jacob answered Shechem and Hamor his father deceitfully, and spoke *this way* because he had defiled Dinah their sister, ¹⁴saying to them, “Giving our sister to someone who is not circumcised is a thing we cannot do; for that *would be* a disgrace to us. ¹⁵But on this *condition* we will give consent to you: if you will become like us and every male of you becomes circumcised, ¹⁶then we will give our daughters to you, and we will take your daughters for us, and we will live with you, and we will become one people. ¹⁷But if you will not listen to us to become circumcised, then we will take our daughter and we will be gone”.

¹⁸And their words pleased Hamor, and Hamor’s son Shechem. ¹⁹And the young man did not delay to do the thing, because he delighted in Jacob’s daughter. And he was the most honoured of all the house of his father. ²⁰And Hamor and his son Shechem

came to the gate of their city, and talked with the men of their city, saying, ²¹“These men *are* friendly with us. Therefore let them live in the land, and trade in it. For, see, the land *is* large enough for them. Let us take their daughters for ourselves as wives, and let us give them our daughters. ²²But only on this *condition* will the men consent to live with us, to be one people: if every male among us becomes circumcised, just as they *are* circumcised. ²³But will not their cattle and their goods and every animal of theirs *become* ours? Only let us give consent to them, and they will live with us”.

²⁴And everyone who went out of the gate of his city listened to Hamor and to his son Shechem, and every male was circumcised, all who went out of the gate of his city.

²⁵And it came about on the third day, when they were in pain, that two of the sons of Jacob, Simeon and Levi, Dinah’s brothers, each took his sword, and came on the city boldly, and killed all the males. ²⁶And they killed Hamor and Shechem his son with the edge of the sword, and took Dinah out of Shechem’s house and left. ²⁷Then the sons of Jacob came on the slain and looted the city, because they had defiled their sister. ²⁸They took their sheep, their oxen, and their donkeys, and whatever was in the city, and whatever was in the field, ²⁹and they carried off all their wealth, and all their little ones, and their wives, and looted everything that was in the houses.

³⁰And Jacob said to Simeon and Levi, “You have brought trouble on me, making me stink among the inhabitants of the land, among the Canaanites and the Perizzites. And since I have few in number, they will gather themselves together against me, and kill me, and I will be destroyed, I and my household”.

³¹And they said, “Should he deal with our sister as with a prostitute?”

35 And God said to Jacob, “Arise, go up to Bethel and live there, and

34:10 “Do business in it”– or “move about freely in it”.

34:13 Did they learn how to use deceit by watching their father? We do not know, but we do know that bad example has great power for evil. And deceitfulness is easily learned because of the deceitful nature of men’s hearts

– Jer 17:9; Ps 58:3.

34:14 “Circumcised”– 17:9-14.

34:20 The main gate of towns and cities is the place where the elders and leaders came together to discuss and decide issues (19:1; Ruth 4:1).

34:25-29 See 49:5-7.

35:1 See 27:43; 28:13,19.

make there an altar to God, who appeared to you when you fled from the face of your brother Esau”.

²Then Jacob said to his household, and to all who were with him, “Put away the foreign gods that *are* among you, and be clean, and change your clothes, ³and let us arise and go up to Bethel. And there I will make an altar to God, who answered me in the day of my distress, and was with me in the way that I went”. ⁴And they gave to Jacob all the foreign gods which they had, and *all* the earrings which *were* in their ears, and Jacob hid them under the oak which was near Shechem. ⁵And they journeyed, and the terror of God was on the cities that *were* around them, and they did not pursue the sons of Jacob.

⁶So Jacob came to Luz, which is in the land of Canaan, that *is*, Bethel, he and all the people with him. ⁷And there he built an altar, and called the place El Bethel, because there God had appeared to him when he fled from the face of his brother.

⁸But Deborah, Rebekah’s nurse, died, and she was buried below Bethel under an oak. Its name was called Allon Bachuth. ⁹And God appeared to Jacob again after he came out of Padan Aram, and blessed him. ¹⁰And God said to him, “Your name *is* Jacob. Your name will not be called Jacob any longer, but Israel will be your name”. And he called his name Israel.

¹¹And God said to him, “I *am* God Almighty. Be fruitful and increase *in number*. A people and a group of peoples will come

from you, and kings will come from your body. ¹²And the land which I gave Abraham and Isaac, I will give to you. And I will give the land to your descendants after you”.

¹³And God went up from him in the place where he had talked with him.

¹⁴And Jacob set up a pillar in the place where he had talked with him, a pillar of stone. And he poured a drink offering on it, and he poured oil on it. ¹⁵And Jacob called the name of the place where God spoke with him, Bethel.

¹⁶And they journeyed from Bethel, and, *with* still a short distance to go to Ephrath, Rachel began to give birth and had severe labour pains. ¹⁷And it came about, when she was having severe labour pains, that the midwife said to her, “Do not be afraid. You will have this son also”. ¹⁸And it happened that as her soul was leaving *her body* (for she died) that she called his name Ben-oni, but his father called him Benjamin.

¹⁹And Rachel died and was buried on the way to Ephrath, which *is* Bethlehem. ²⁰And Jacob set up a pillar on her grave. To this day that *is* the pillar of Rachel’s grave.

²¹And Israel journeyed on, and pitched his tent beyond the tower of Edar. ²²And when Israel was living in that region, it so happened that Reuben went and lay with his father’s concubine Bilhah, and Israel heard *about it*. Now there were twelve sons of Jacob.

²³The sons of Leah *were* Jacob’s firstborn Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, and Zebulun.

²⁴The sons of Rachel *were* Joseph and

35:2 See 31:19,30,34. Is it only now that Jacob tells them to put those gods away? Long before he should have insisted that his family forsake false gods and idols and serve the only true God. Compare Josh 24:15,23; Ps 16:4.

35:3 “*Altar to God*”— more and more Jacob was thinking of God as his God. He had found that God is a faithful and loving God who answers prayer. Compare Ps 34:4,6,17; 107:6; 116:1-2.

35:4 “*Earrings*”— possibly these had been worn as magic amulets. Otherwise, why bury them under the oak? Did they not understand that such things have no power whatever to protect from evil? Later the Bible makes it abundantly clear that anyone who wants to serve the one true God must part with all gods, idols, and magic.

35:5 “*Terror of God*”— God protected them by creating fear in the hearts of the Canaanites. Compare Ex 15:16; 23:27; Deut 2:25.

35:7 See 28:11-22. Jacob fulfills his vow. And

he had taken another step forward in spiritual understanding and devotion to God. In chapter 28 it seems he was more occupied in his thoughts with the place Bethel. Here he is more occupied with the God who had come to him at Bethel. El-Bethel means “the God of Bethel”.

35:8 “*Allon-Bacuth*”— means “oak of weeping”.

35:9-10 See 25:26; 32:28.

35:11-12 “*God Almighty*”— in Hebrew El-Shaddai (see 17:1). Concerning the promise here see 17:3-8. The covenant God made with Abraham was confirmed to Jacob.

35:14 “*Oil on it*”— see note at 28:18.

35:15 Bethel means “house of God”.

35:16-18 Ben-oni means “Son of my sorrow” or “Son of my trouble”. Benjamin means “Son of the right hand”.

35:22 See 49:3-4. Because of this sin, though he was the firstborn, he was passed over and his birthright was given to the sons of Joseph (9:3-4; 1 Chron 5:1; Num 32:23).

Benjamin.

²⁵And the sons of Bilhah, Rachel's maidservant, were Dan and Naphtali.

²⁶And the sons of Zilpah, Leah's maidservant, were Gad and Asher.

These are the sons of Jacob who were born to him in Padan-Aram.

²⁷And Jacob came to Mamre to his father Isaac, to the city of Arbah, which is Hebron, where Abraham and Isaac stayed for a time.

²⁸And Isaac's time *on earth* was a hundred and eighty years. ²⁹And Isaac expired. He died and was gathered to his people, old and full of days. And his sons Esau and Jacob buried him.

36 Now these *are* the generations of Esau, who is Edom. ²Esau took his wives from the daughters of Canaan: Adah the daughter of Elon the Hittite, and Aholibamah the daughter of Anah the daughter of Zibeon the Hivite, ³and Bashemath, Ishmael's daughter, the sister of Nebajoth.

⁴And Adah bore Eliphaz to Esau, and Bashemath bore Reuel, ⁵and Aholibamah bore Jeush, Jaalam, and Korah. These were the sons of Esau, who were born to him in the land of Canaan.

⁶And Esau took his wives, and his sons, and his daughters, and all the people of his house, and his cattle, and all his animals, and all his goods which he had acquired in the land of Canaan, and went into a land away from the presence of his brother Jacob. ⁷For their possessions were too many for them to live together, and the land where they were foreigners could not sustain them because of their livestock. ⁸So Esau lived in mount Seir. Esau *is* Edom.

⁹And these *are* the generations of Esau the father of the Edomites in mount Seir;

¹⁰These are the names of Esau's sons: Eliphaz the son of Adah the wife of Esau, Reuel the son of Bashemath the wife of Esau.

¹¹And the sons of Eliphaz were Teman, Omar, Zepho, and Gatam, and Kenaz.

¹²Esau's son Eliphaz had a concubine, Timna, and she bore Amalek to Eliphaz. These were the sons of Esau's wife Adah.

¹³And these were the sons of Reuel: Nahath, Zerah, Shammah, and Mizzah: these were the sons of Esau's wife Bashemath.

¹⁴And these were the sons of Aholibamah, the daughter of Anah the daughter of Zibeon, Esau's wife: she bore to Esau Jeush, Jaalam, and Korah.

¹⁵These were the chiefs among the offspring of Esau. The sons of Eliphaz, the firstborn of Esau: chief Teman, chief Omar, chief Zepho, chief Kenaz, ¹⁶chief Korah, chief Gatam, and chief Amalek. These were the chiefs who came from Eliphaz in the land of Edom, these were the sons of Adah.

¹⁷And these were the sons of Reuel Esau's son: chief Nahath, chief Zerah, chief Shammah, chief Mizzah. These are the chiefs that came from Reuel in the land of Edom, these were the sons of Esau's wife Bashemath.

¹⁸And these were the sons of Esau's wife Aholibamah: chief Jeush, chief Jaalam, chief Korah. These were the chiefs *descended* from Aholibamah the daughter of Anah, Esau's wife.

¹⁹These were the sons of Esau, who is Edom, and these were their chiefs.

²⁰These were the sons of Seir the Horite, who lived in the land: Lotan, Shobal, Zibeon, Anah, ²¹Dishon, Ezer, and Dishan. These were the chiefs of the Horites, the children of Seir in the land of Edom.

²²And the children of Lotan were Hori and Hemam. And Lotan's sister was Timna.

²³And the children of Shobal were these: Alvan, Manahath, Ebal, Shepho, and Onam.

²⁴And these were the children of Zibeon: both Ajah and Anah. This was *that* Anah who found the mules in the wilderness, as he tended the donkeys of his father Zibeon.

²⁵And the children of Anah were these: Dishon and Aholibamah the daughter of Anah.

²⁶And these were the children of Dishon: Hemdan, Eshban, Ithran, and Cheran.

²⁷The children of Ezer were these: Bilhan, Zaavan, and Akan.

²⁸The children of Dishan were these: Uz and Aran.

35:29 This was 43 years after the event of 27:4.

36:1 See 25:25,30.

36:2-3 Note on polygamy at 30:1.

36:8 "*Seir*"— an area south of the Dead Sea.

36:12 "*Amalek*"— Ex 17:8-16; Num 24:20;

Deut 25:17-19; 1 Sam 15:2-3.

36:15 "*Teman*"— Job 2:11.

36:20 See 14:6. The Horites were a people living in the area before Abraham came from Ur of Chaldea.

36:28 "*Uz*"— Job 1:1.

²⁹These were the chiefs that came from the Horites: chief Lotan, chief Shobal, chief Zibeon, chief Anah, ³⁰chief Dishon, chief Ezer, chief Dishan. These were the chiefs who came from Hori, among their chiefs in the land of Seir.

³¹And these were the kings that reigned in the land of Edom, before any king reigned over the children of Israel. ³²And Bela the son of Beor reigned in Edom, and the name of his city was Dinhabah.

³³And Bela died, and Jobab, the son of Zerah of Bozrah, reigned in his place.

³⁴And Jobab died, and Husham of the land of Temani reigned in his place.

³⁵And Husham died, and Hadad, the son of Bedad, who attacked Midian in the field of Moab, reigned in his place. And the name of his city was Avith.

³⁶And Hadad died, and Samlah of Masrekah reigned in his place.

³⁷And Samlah died, and Saul of Rehoboth by the river reigned in his place.

³⁸And Saul died, and Baalhanan the son of Achbor reigned in his place.

³⁹And Baalhanan the son of Achbor died, and Hadar reigned in his place. And the name of his city was Pau, and his wife's name was Mehetabel, the daughter of Matred, the daughter of Mezahab.

⁴⁰And these are the names of the chiefs descended from Esau, according to their families, according to their places, by their names: chief Timnah, chief Alvah, chief Jetheth, ⁴¹chief Aholibamah, chief Elah, chief Pinon, ⁴²chief Kenaz, chief Teman, chief Mibzar, ⁴³chief Magdiel, chief Iram. These were the chiefs of Edom, according to their settlements in the land of their

possession. This was Esau, the father of the Edomites.

37 And Jacob lived in the land where his father had been a stranger, in the land of Canaan.

²These are the generations of Jacob. Joseph, seventeen years old, was pasturing the flock with his brothers. The boy was with the sons of Bilhah, and with the sons of Zilpah, his father's wives, and Joseph brought to his father a bad report about them.

³Now Israel loved Joseph more than any of his children, because he was the son of his old age. And he made a coat of many colours for him. ⁴And when his brothers saw that their father loved him more than any of his brothers, they hated him, and could not speak peaceably to him.

⁵And Joseph had a dream and told it to his brothers, and they hated him still more. ⁶And he said to them, "Please listen to this dream which I had. ⁷For, see, we were binding sheaves in the field, and, lo and behold, my sheaf rose and also stood upright, and, see, your sheaves stood around and bowed down to my sheaf".

⁸And his brothers said to him, "Will you really rule us! Will you lord it over us!" And they hated him still more because of his dreams, and because of his words.

⁹And he had still another dream, and told it to his brothers, and said, "See, I have had another dream. And, lo and behold, the sun and the moon and the eleven stars bowed down to me".

¹⁰And he told it to his father and to his brothers. And his father rebuked him and said to him, "What is this dream you have had!

36:31 "King"— 1 Sam 8:4-5. This verse could possibly be translated "These were the kings who reigned in Edom before an Israelite king reigned over them".

37:2 "Joseph"— he is the center of the rest of the book of Genesis (except for chapters 38 and 49). Through him blessing came to the people of Israel and to other nations. In this respect he is a type or picture of Christ.

"Bad report"— judging from what we know of both Joseph and his brothers as seen in the rest of their history, this bad report would surely have been true and accurate.

37:3 "Of many colours"— the meaning of the Hebrew word here is uncertain (also vs 23,32).

"For him"— showing such favoritism was surely

not wise (it never is), and it brought great trouble to Joseph.

37:4 "To him"— see v 11; Prov 14:30; 27:4; Matt 27:18. Envy comes out of man's sinful nature and often leads to further sin.

37:5 "Dream"— notes at 15:12; Num 12:6; Deut 13:1.

37:7-8 See the fulfillment in 42:6,9; 43:26; 44:14; 49:26; Deut 33:16. Through Joseph's dreams God was revealing the truth.

37:9 "Told it"— Joseph may not have shown much wisdom in this, but, then, he was only seventeen.

37:10 As far as we know Jacob never bowed down to Joseph, but Joseph became the prime minister of Egypt and so the ruler over Jacob and his family after they came there.

Will I and your mother and your brothers really come to bow down to the earth before you?" ¹¹And his brothers were jealous of him, but his father kept the thing *in mind*.

¹²And his brothers went to pasture their father's flock in Shechem. ¹³And Israel said to Joseph, "Your brothers are pasturing *the flock* in Shechem, aren't they? Come, I will send you to them". And he said to him, "Here I am".

¹⁴And he said to him, "Please go and see whether it is going well with your brothers, and well with the flocks, and bring me word again". So he sent him out of the valley of Hebron, and he came to Shechem. ¹⁵And a man found him, when he appeared wandering in the field, and the man asked him, saying, "What are you looking for?"

¹⁶And he said, "I'm looking for my brothers. Please tell me where they are pasturing *their flocks*".

¹⁷And the man said, "They left here; for I heard them say, 'Let's go to Dothan.'" And Joseph went after his brothers, and found them in Dothan. ¹⁸And when they saw him at a distance, and before he came near them, they plotted against him to kill him.

¹⁹And they said to one another, "Look, this dreamer is coming. ²⁰So come on now, let's kill him, and throw him into some pit, and we will say, 'Some savage beast has eaten him.' And we shall see what becomes

of his dreams".

²¹And Reuben heard *it*, and he saved him from their hands by saying, "Let us not kill him". ²²And Reuben said to them, "Do not shed blood. Throw him into this pit *here* in the wilderness, but lay no hand on him". *He said* this so that he might rescue him from their hands, and take him back to his father again.

²³And it came about when Joseph came to his brothers that they stripped Joseph of *his* coat, his coat of *many* colours that he had on. ²⁴And they took him and threw him into a pit. The pit was empty; *there was* no water in it.

²⁵And they sat down to eat bread. And they raised their eyes and looked, and, a group of Ishmaelites appeared, coming from Gilead with their camels bearing spices and balm and myrrh, going along carrying *them* down to Egypt.

²⁶And Judah said to his brothers, "What do we gain by killing our brother, and concealing his blood? ²⁷Come, let's sell him to the Ishmaelites, and let our hand not be on him; for he *is* our brother *and* our flesh". And his brothers listened *to him*.

²⁸Then *some* Midianites, merchants, were passing by. And they pulled Joseph up and lifted him out of the pit, and sold Joseph to the Ishmaelites for twenty *pieces* of silver. And they took Joseph to Egypt.

37:11 Acts 7:9.

"*Mind*"— Luke 2:19,51.

37:12 "*Shechem*"— Jacob owned land there — 33:18-19.

37:14 "*Hebron*"— the straight distance from Hebron to Shechem was about 80 kilometers.

37:17 Dothan was about 20 kilometers north of Shechem.

37:18 "*Kill him*"— compare Ps 31:13-14; 37:12,32; Mark 14:1; John 11:53. We see already what the people of Israel were like. Their later history was similar until at last they were responsible for the death of the Son of God. But we should not think that we, by nature, are any better than they — Rom 3:9,19,23.

37:19 "*Dreamer*"— spoken sarcastically in hatred.

37:21-22 See 42:22. Reuben felt responsible for Joseph as the oldest, it is possible he had a different motive. Notice in vs. 29, when Reuben went back to rescue Joseph (apparently he was not present when Joseph was sold to the Midianites), he laments, "The boy is not there. And where am I to go!" That added with verse 22, "He said that so that he might rescue them from his hands, and take him back to his father

again". At the time Reuben had already defiled his father's bed by sleeping with Jacob's concubine. Jacob knew it and now Reuben had lost favor and his birthright. Is it possible, Reuben saw this as an opportunity to restore him in favor with Jacob? Certainly, by pulling Joseph out of the pit and bringing him back to their father, Reuben would be seen as a hero in the eyes of Jacob and Joseph — vs 29,30.

37:25 "*Ishmaelites*"— 16:11-12.

37:27 "*Flesh*"— did they imagine that selling their brother into slavery instead of killing him showed brotherly love?!

37:28 These merchants are called Ishmaelites in vs 25,28 and 39:1, and Midianites in vs 28,36. Either there was a mixture of these two clans in this group or they were all Ishmaelites who lived in the land of Midian and so were both Ishmaelites and Midianites. Both of these peoples were descended from Abraham, and so closely related.

"*Twenty pieces of silver*"— this total amount was a little more than 230 grams — no great sum as payment for the greatest man of his generation. Compare Zech 11:13; Matt 26:15.

²⁹And Reuben returned to the pit, and, *lo and behold*, Joseph was not in the pit. And he tore his clothes. ³⁰And he returned to his brothers and said, “The boy *is not there*. And I, where am I to go!”

³¹And they took Joseph’s coat, and killed *one* of the young goats, and dipped the coat in the blood, ³²and they sent the coat of *many* colours, and had *it* brought to their father, saying, “We have found this. Examine it now *and see* whether it is your son’s coat or not”. ³³And he examined it and said, “*It is* my son’s coat! A savage beast has devoured him! Without doubt Joseph has been torn in pieces!”

³⁴And Jacob tore his clothes, and put on a loincloth of sackcloth, and mourned for his son many days. ³⁵And all his sons and all his daughters rose up to comfort him, but he refused to be comforted. And he said, “For I will go down to the grave to my son *still* mourning”. So his father wept for him.

³⁶And the Midianites sold him in Egypt to Potiphar, one of Pharaoh’s officials, *and* captain of the guard.

38 And it came about at that time that Judah left his brothers and went down and visited a certain Adullamite, whose name was Hirah. ²And Judah saw there a daughter of a certain Canaanite,

whose name was Shuah. And he took her and went in with her. ³And she conceived and bore a son. And he called his name Er. ⁴And she conceived again and bore a son. And she called his name Onan. ⁵And she once again conceived and bore a son, and called his name Shelah. It was at Chezib that she gave birth to him.

⁶And Judah got a wife for Er his firstborn. Her name was Tamar. ⁷And Er, Judah’s firstborn, was wicked in the sight of the LORD, and the LORD put him to death.

⁸And Judah said to Onan, “Go in to your brother’s wife, and marry her, and raise up offspring for your brother”. ⁹And Onan knew that the offspring would not be his. And it came about that when he went in to his brother’s wife, he spilled *it* on the ground, so that he would not produce offspring for his brother. ¹⁰And the thing which he did displeased the LORD, so he killed him also.

¹¹Then said Judah to Tamar his daughter-in-law, “Remain a widow at your father’s house, until Shelah my son has grown up”. For he said, “Perhaps he may die also, like his brothers”. And Tamar went and lived in her father’s house.

¹²And in process of time the daughter of Shuah, Judah’s wife, died. And Judah was comforted and went up to Timnath to those shearing his sheep, he and his friend Hirah

37:29 “*Clothes*”— v 34; 44:13 – in those days the tearing of garments was a sign of grief or shock. **37:31-32** Jacob began his career by deceiving his father. Now he reaped again what he sowed (Gal 6:7), being deceived by his sons. This deception also involved a goat—compare 27:6-19. **37:35** “*Grave*”— in Hebrew “Sheol”. This is the first use of the word in the Old Testament. It meant the place to which the dead go and included both the grave and the unseen world where the souls of men went after death. Perhaps a better translation would be “the realm of the dead”. See also note at Luke 16:23. In Old Testament days Sheol was usually regarded as a place of sorrow (2 Sam 22:6; Ps 9:17; 18:5; 116:3; Isa 14:9-17; Ezek 32:21). The Old Testament does not have much to say about the condition of those who have died, whether believers or unbelievers. The New Testament has far more on the subject. Life and immortality were brought to light through Jesus Christ (2 Tim 1:10).

38:1 “*Judah*”— there is a great contrast between this chapter and the next. The two chapters taken together show the greatness of Joseph’s character compared with Judah’s. Judah fell into

the sins of the Canaanites. But in Egypt, alone and friendless, Joseph remained pure.

“*Adullam*”— a town in the southern part of Canaan.

38:7 “*Death*”— the form of the Hebrew verb here does not necessarily mean God killed Onan Himself, but suggests that God brought about his death using some means or other. If God purposes that someone die He has all sorts of means which He can use to see that it happens.

38:8 “*Brother*”— in those days it was the duty of the brother of the deceased husband to marry his widow. At the time of Moses this became the law for the nation Israel (Deut 25:5-6; Ruth 4:5; Matt 22:24). But even before Moses this rule must have been considered binding.

38:9 “*Ground*”— Onan used this means of birth control from a wrong motive. Within the marriage relationship birth control itself is not sinful. Nowhere in the Bible is there a command not to practice it or any suggestion that it is wrong. It was Onan’s bad motive that so displeased God (v 10).

“*His*”— any offspring would have had his brother’s name, and been counted as his brother’s. Compare Ruth 4:5-6.

38:11 “*Grown up*”— compare Ruth 1:11-13.

the Adullamite.

¹³And Tamar was told, saying, “Look, your father-in-law is going up to Timnath to shear his sheep”. ¹⁴And she took off her widow’s clothes, covered *herself* with a veil, wrapped herself up, and sat in an open place which was by the Timnath road. For she saw that Shelah had grown up, and she had not been given to him as *his* wife.

¹⁵When Judah saw her he thought she was a prostitute, because she had covered her face. ¹⁶And he turned to her at the roadside, and said, “Go on now and let me come in with you”; for he did not know that she was his daughter-in-law. And she said, “What will you give me to come in with me?” ¹⁷And he said, “I will send a young goat from the flock”. And she said, “Will you give me *something* as a pledge until you send it?”

¹⁸And he said, “What pledge shall I give you?” And she said, “Your seal and your cord and your staff that’s in your hand”. And he gave *them* to her, and went in with her. And she conceived by him. ¹⁹And she got up and went away, and put aside her veil, and put on widow’s clothes.

²⁰And Judah sent the young goat by the hand of his friend the Adullamite, to get *his* pledge from the woman’s hand. But he did not find her. ²¹Then he asked the men of that place, saying, “Where is the prostitute who was by the roadside?” And they said, “There wasn’t any prostitute in this place”.

²²And he returned to Judah and said, “I can’t find her. Also the men of the place said that there had been no prostitute in that *place*”.

²³And Judah said, “Let her take *it* with her, so we won’t be put to shame. See, I sent this young goat and you didn’t find her”.

²⁴And about three months after *this* it came about that Judah was told, saying,

38:14 “*Wife*”— she saw that Judah was deceiving her and she had no hope of another marriage. So she took the following way to have a child.

38:24 Judah did not condemn himself for his own sin (vs 15,16), but was quick to condemn Tamar. In other words, he behaved as the general lot of human beings do. See 3:12-13; Rom 2:1,21-23. If she deserved death, so did he (see Lev 20:10; 21:9; Deut 22:22).

38:26 A poor and partial confession. A better one would have been, “I am more sinful than she”.

38:29 “*Perez*”— Ruth 4:18-22; Matt 1:1-3. Perez means “a breach”, or “a breaking out”.

“Your daughter-in-law Tamar has acted like a prostitute, and look, she is pregnant because of *her* prostitution”. And Judah said, “Bring her out, and let her be burned!”

²⁵When she was brought out, she sent *word* to her father-in-law, saying, “I *am* pregnant by the man who owns these”. And she said, “Please look at them and see who these *belong* to: the seal and cord, and staff”. ²⁶And Judah recognized *them* and said, “She has been more righteous than I; because I did not give her to my son Shelah”. And he did not have relations with her again.

²⁷And at the time she gave birth, it so happened that twins *were* in her womb. ²⁸And as she was giving birth it came about that *one* put out *his* hand, and the midwife took and tied a scarlet *thread* on his hand, saying, “This one came out first”. ²⁹And when he drew back his hand it so happened that suddenly his brother came out. And she said, “How you have made a breach for yourself!” Therefore his name was called Perez. ³⁰And afterwards his brother, who had the scarlet *thread* on his hand, came out, and his name was called Zerah.

39 And Joseph was brought down to Egypt, and Potiphar, *one* of Pharaoh’s officials, the captain of the guard, an Egyptian, bought him from the hands of the Ishmaelites, who had brought him down there.

²And the LORD was with Joseph, and he was a man who brought prosperity, and he was in the house of his master the Egyptian.

³And his master saw that the LORD was with him, and that the LORD caused everything *he had* in his hands to prosper.

⁴And Joseph found favour in his sight, and he served him. And he put *Joseph* in charge of his house, and entrusted everything he

38:30 Zerah can mean “dawning” or “scarlet” or “brightness”. Chapter 38 gives more evidence that the Bible shows us what people are like and how much they need the grace of God if they are ever to be saved.

39:1 37:25,28,36.

39:2 “*With Joseph*”— vs 3,21,23; Acts 7:9; Gen 21:20; 26:3; 27:45; 31:3,5; 32:9; 35:3. God with us is the greatest blessing of all.

“*Prosperity*”— the Hebrew here does not necessarily mean that Joseph himself became prosperous.

39:3 “*Everything he had in his hands*”— compare Josh 1:8; Ps 1:3.

had into his hands. ⁵And from the time *that* he put him in charge of his house and of all that he had, it came about that the LORD blessed the Egyptian's house on account of Joseph, and the blessing of the LORD was on all that he had in the house, and in the field. ⁶So he left all that he had in Joseph's hand, and he did not know anything he had, except the food he ate. And Joseph was handsome in form and in appearance.

⁷And after these things, it came about that his master's wife cast her eyes at Joseph, and said, "Lie down with me".

⁸But he refused and said to his master's wife, "Look, with me *here*, my master doesn't know what is in the house, and he has entrusted everything he has into my hands. ⁹No one *is* greater in this house than I. He has not kept back anything from me except you, because you *are* his wife. How then can I do this great evil and sin against God?" ¹⁰And it came about that she spoke to Joseph day after day, but he did not listen to her to lie down with her *or* to be with her.

¹¹And about this time it so happened that Joseph went into the house to do his work, and none of the men of the house was there inside. ¹²And she caught him by his cloak, saying, "Lie down with me". But he left his cloak in her hand, ran and got out.

¹³And when she saw that he had left his cloak in her hand, and had run away, it came about ¹⁴that she called to the men of her household, and spoke to them, saying, "See, he has brought in a Hebrew to us to mock us. He came in to me to lie with me, and I

cried out with a loud voice, ¹⁵and when he heard me raising my voice and crying out, it so happened that he left his cloak with me, ran and got out".

¹⁶And she put his cloak beside her until his master came home. ¹⁷And she spoke to him with these words, saying, "The Hebrew slave, whom you brought to us, came in to me to mock me. ¹⁸And when I raised my voice and cried out, it so happened that he left his cloak with me and ran out".

¹⁹And when his master heard the words of his wife, which she spoke to him, saying, "This is the way your slave acted toward me", it came about that his anger was aroused. ²⁰And Joseph's master took him and put him in the prison, a place where the king's prisoners were confined. And there he was in the prison.

²¹But the LORD was with Joseph, and showed him mercy and gave him favour in the sight of the keeper of the prison. ²²And the keeper of the prison entrusted all the prisoners that were in the prison into Joseph's hands, and he attended to whatever they did there. ²³The keeper of the prison paid no attention to anything *that was* under his hand, because the LORD was with him, and the LORD caused everything he did to prosper.

40 And it came about after these things, *that* the butler of the king of Egypt and his baker offended their master, the king of Egypt. ²And Pharaoh was angry with these two officials of his, with the

39:5 "*Joseph*"— the person who walks with God will be a blessing wherever he goes (12:2). And to receive God's blessings and to be a blessing to others Joseph did not need the deceitful tricks his father once practiced.

39:6 Joseph always proved himself the kind of person whom others could trust with everything they had – vs 22,23; 41:41. The master fully trusted Joseph that he was not concerned about his belongings, their quantity, quality or condition. He was first faithful in small things and later in great things (compare Luke 16:10). He is a shining example of the sort of men the church today needs so much. Alas that there are so many who are the opposite of Joseph and cannot be trusted with anything.

39:8 Prov 5:3-4; 6:23-24; 7:4-5,25-27.

39:9 "*Great evil*"— Ex 20:14; Lev 20:10; Prov 2:16-17; 5:3-23.

"*Against God*"— Gen 20:6; 42:18; 2 Sam 12:13;

Ps 51:4. The reason Joseph kept himself from sinning against God is found in 42:18.

39:12 "*Ran*"— 2 Tim 2:22; Prov 2:16; 5:8.

39:14-18 See Ps 11:2; 37:12; 38:20. But even the slander of a wicked woman worked for Joseph's eventual good – it took him to prison where he came to the king's notice, and so to the highest position in Egypt, next to Pharaoh. See and believe Rom 8:28.

39:14 "*Hebrew*"— 11:16.

39:19 Prov 6:34.

39:20 Ps 105:17-19. See note at Jer 37:15-16. For note on the good that can come by afflictions see Job 3:20.

39:21 "*Favour*"— if God is with us and shows us kindness it can little matter where we are. Compare Acts 16:22-25; Phil 4:11-13.

39:22 Verse 6.

39:23 Verse 3.

"*Under his hand*" – under his supervision.

"*With him*"— v 2.

chief of the butlers and with the chief of the bakers. ³And he put them in custody in the house of the captain of the guard, in the prison, the place where Joseph was confined. ⁴And the captain of the guard put them in Joseph's charge and he served them. And they continued for a time in custody.

⁵And both of them had dreams, each one dreamed in the same night, each man with a meaning in his dream, the butler and the baker of the king of Egypt, who were confined in the prison.

⁶And Joseph came in to them in the morning, and looked at them, and saw that they were sad. ⁷And he asked *these* officials of Pharaoh who were with him in custody in his master's house, saying, "Why are you looking sad today?"

⁸And they said to him, "We have had a dream, and *there is* no interpreter for it". And Joseph said to them, "Do not interpretations belong to God? Please tell me the *dreams*".

⁹And the chief butler told his dream to Joseph and said to him, "In my dream, see, a vine was before me, ¹⁰and on the vine were three branches. And as it was budding, its blossoms came out, and its clusters produced ripe grapes. ¹¹And Pharaoh's cup was in my hand, and I took the grapes, and pressed them into Pharaoh's cup, and gave the cup into Pharaoh's hand".

¹²And Joseph said to him, "This *is* its interpretation: the three branches *are* three days. ¹³Within three days Pharaoh will lift up your head, and restore you to your place, and you will put Pharaoh's cup into his hand, just the way you did before when you were his butler. ¹⁴But when it goes well with you, think about me and please show kindness to me, and mention me to Pharaoh, and get me out of this house. ¹⁵For in fact I was kidnapped from the land of the Hebrews, and here also I have done nothing that they should put me in the dungeon".

40:4 God's hand was in all this, working for Joseph's eventual release from prison— 41:9-14.

40:5 "Dreams"— 15:12; 20:3,6; 28:12; 31:10-11,24. God, who put these two men near Joseph, also gave them their dreams.

40:8 "God"— 41:16; Dan 2:27-28.

40:12 Dan 2:36; 4:18-19.

40:15 37:26-28.

40:16 "Three white baskets"— or, possibly, "three baskets of bread".

40:23 "Forgot him"— the cupbearer forgot Joseph, but God did not. And in His way, and in His

¹⁶When the chief baker saw that the interpretation was good, he said to Joseph, "In my dream, see, *I had* three white baskets on my head. ¹⁷And in the topmost basket *there were* all kinds of baked goods for Pharaoh, and the birds ate them out of the basket on my head".

¹⁸And Joseph answered and said, "This *is* its interpretation: the three baskets *are* three days. ¹⁹Within three days Pharaoh will lift off your head from you, and hang you on a tree. And the birds will eat your flesh off of you".

²⁰And the third day, *which was* Pharaoh's birthday, it so happened that he made a feast for all his servants, and he lifted up the head of the chief butler and of the chief baker among his servants. ²¹And he restored the chief butler to his place as butler again, and he gave the cup into Pharaoh's hand. ²²But he hanged the chief baker, just as Joseph had interpreted for them.

²³Still the chief butler did not remember Joseph, but forgot him.

41 And this happened at the end of two full years: Pharaoh was dreaming, and it appeared that he stood by the river. ²And, suddenly, up out of the river came seven cows, sleek and fat, and fed in a meadow. ³And then after them seven *other* cows came up out of the river, ugly and emaciated, and stood beside the other cows on the bank of the river. ⁴And the ugly and emaciated cows ate up the seven sleek and fat cows. Then Pharaoh woke up.

⁵And he slept and dreamed a second time, and saw seven ears of grain coming up on one stalk, plump and good. ⁶And then seven ears, thin and scorched by the east wind, sprung up after them. ⁷And the seven thin ears ate up the seven plump and full ears. And Pharaoh woke up, and, see, *it was* a dream.

⁸And in the morning it happened that his spirit was troubled, and he sent and called for

perfect time, God brought Joseph out of prison. **41:1** "Dreaming"— 40:5. Notes and references at 15:12; Num 12:6; Deut 13:1.

41:5 "Grain"— the KJV has "corn", but corn, as we know it, was not found in Egypt in those days.

41:8 Compare Dan 1:20; 2:2,27; 4:7. Four centuries after Joseph, magicians were still practicing their arts in Egypt— Ex 7:11,22; 8:7,18,19; 9:11. People often think magicians can do much more than they can actually do. They sometimes mistakenly believe that their tricks are a display of divine power. All types of sorcery are forbidden in God's Word— Deut 18:10-13.

all the magicians of Egypt, and all its wise men. And Pharaoh told them his dreams, but no one could interpret them for Pharaoh.

⁹Then Pharaoh's chief butler spoke up and said, "Today I remember my faults. ¹⁰Pharaoh was angry with his servants, and put me in custody in the house of the captain of the guard, *both* me and the chief baker. ¹¹And we dreamed dreams in the same night, I and he. Each of us had a dream with its *own* meaning. ¹²And a young man was there with us, a Hebrew, a servant of the captain of the guard. And we told him our dreams and he interpreted *them* for us, interpreting for each man according to his dream. ¹³And *that's* what happened; it came about just as he interpreted for us. He restored me to my place, and hanged him".

¹⁴Then Pharaoh sent and called Joseph, and they brought him quickly from the dungeon. And he shaved himself, changed his clothes, and came in to Pharaoh.

¹⁵And Pharaoh said to Joseph, "I have had a dream, and *there is* no one who can interpret it. But I have heard it said about you, *that* you can understand a dream to interpret it".

¹⁶And Joseph answered Pharaoh, saying, "*It is* not in me. God will give Pharaoh an answer for *his* welfare".

¹⁷And Pharaoh said to Joseph, "In my dream, see, I stood on the bank of the river, ¹⁸and suddenly up out of the river came seven cows, fat and sleek, and fed in a meadow. ¹⁹And then up came seven other cows after them, poor, very ugly and emaciated, such as I have never seen for ugliness in all the land of Egypt. ²⁰And the lean and ugly cows ate up the first seven, *the* fat cows. ²¹And when they had eaten them up, it could not be known that they had eaten them, for they *were* still just as ugly as in the beginning. So I woke up. ²²Again I saw in my dream, and there appeared seven ears coming up on one

stalk, full and good, ²³and then seven ears, withered, thin, *and* scorched by the east wind, sprung up after them. ²⁴And the thin ears ate up the seven good ears. I told *this* to the magicians, but no one could explain *it* to me".

²⁵And Joseph said to Pharaoh, "The dreams of Pharaoh *are* one *and the same*. God has shown Pharaoh what he is about to do. ²⁶The seven good cows *are* seven years, and the seven good ears *are* seven years. The dreams *are* one *and the same*. ²⁷And the seven thin and ugly cows that came up after them *are* seven years. And the seven empty ears scorched by the east wind will be seven years of famine.

²⁸"This *is* the thing that I said to Pharaoh: God is showing Pharaoh what he is about to do. ²⁹See, seven years of great plenty throughout all the land of Egypt are coming. ³⁰And after them seven years of famine will come, and all the abundance will be forgotten in the land of Egypt, and the famine will consume the land. ³¹And the abundance will be unknown in the land because of that famine which follows, for it *will be* very severe. ³²And as for the dream being twice repeated to Pharaoh, this was because the thing has been decided by God, and God will shortly cause it to happen.

³³"Therefore now let Pharaoh look for a man discreet and wise, and set him over the land of Egypt. ³⁴Let Pharaoh do *this*, and let him appoint officials over the land, and take up the fifth part *of the produce* of the land of Egypt in the seven years of plenty. ³⁵And let them gather all the food of those coming good years, and store up grain under the control of Pharaoh, and let them keep the food in the cities. ³⁶And that food will be as a reserve for the land for the seven years of famine that will occur in the land of Egypt, so that the land does not perish because of the famine".

³⁷And this word was good in the eyes of

41:9 "*Butler*"— 40:14,23. God, after He permitted the butler to forget Joseph, now, at the proper time, causes him to remember him. Even things like this are in His hands.

41:14 "*Dungeon*"— God's time had come. Compare Rev 2:10; Ps 31:15.

41:15 Dan 5:16.

41:16 "*Not in me*"— Joseph had the humility seen in other great servants of God— Dan 2:22,28,30; Acts 3:12; 2 Cor 3:5. Jam 4:6 is a word to write on our hearts and read daily.

41:25 Compare Dan 2:28-29,45.

41:30 "*Famine*"— God sometimes sends famines

in judgment on a people's sins. See Lev 26:18-20; Deut 28:15,23,24; Ruth 1:1; 2 Sam 21:1; 2 Kings 4:38; 8:1; 25:3; Ps 105:16. At that time in Egypt God had a much wider purpose, as the following chapters reveal.

41:32 In other words, God was emphasizing the truth He was revealing. See 37:5-9; Amos 7:1-6,7-9; 8:1-3. See also note at Dan 7:3-7.

41:37 Pharaoh had not asked for advice, but Joseph's advice (vs 33-36) was so full of good sense that Pharaoh immediately accepted it. It was God alone who gave such wisdom to Joseph (Acts 7:10).

Pharaoh, and in the eyes of all his servants. ³⁸And Pharaoh said to his servants, “Can we find *one such* as this, a man in whom the Spirit of God is?”

³⁹And Pharaoh said to Joseph, “Since God has shown you all this, no one is as discreet and wise as you are. ⁴⁰You shall be over my house, and all my people will be ruled according to your word. Only in the throne will I be greater than you”.

⁴¹And Pharaoh said to Joseph, “See, I have put you over all the land of Egypt”. ⁴²And Pharaoh took off his ring from his hand, and put it on Joseph’s hand, and dressed him in fine linen clothes, and put a gold chain around his neck, ⁴³and he caused him to ride in his second chariot, and they shouted ahead of him, “Bow the knee!” And he made him ruler over all the land of Egypt.

⁴⁴And Pharaoh said to Joseph, “I *am* Pharaoh, and without you no one will lift up his hand or foot in all the land of Egypt”. ⁴⁵And Pharaoh called Joseph’s name Zaphenath-Paneah; and he gave him Asenath the daughter of Potipherah, priest of On as his wife. And Joseph went throughout the *whole* land of Egypt.

⁴⁶And Joseph was thirty years old when he stood before Pharaoh, king of Egypt. And Joseph went out from the presence of Pharaoh, and travelled throughout all the land of Egypt. ⁴⁷And in the seven years of plenty the earth produced by handfuls. ⁴⁸And he gathered all the food of those seven years which occurred in the land of Egypt, and stored up the food in the cities. He stored up the food from the fields which were around each city in the same *city*. ⁴⁹And Joseph gathered grain as the sand of the sea, great quantities, until he stopped counting, for it was beyond measure.

⁵⁰And before the years of famine came, two

sons were born to Joseph, whom Asenath, the daughter of Potipherah, priest of On, bore to him. ⁵¹And Joseph called the name of the firstborn Manasseh, saying “For God has made me forget all my trouble and all my father’s house”. ⁵²And the name of the second he called Ephraim: “For God has caused me to be fruitful in the land of my affliction”.

⁵³And the seven years of plenty that occurred in the land of Egypt ended. ⁵⁴And the seven years of famine began to come, just as Joseph had said. And the famine occurred in every land, but in all the land of Egypt there was bread. ⁵⁵And when the whole land of Egypt *began to* experience the famine, the people cried out to Pharaoh for bread. And Pharaoh said to all the Egyptians, “Go to Joseph. Do what he tells you”.

⁵⁶And the famine was over the whole surface of the earth. And Joseph opened all the storehouses, and sold *grain* to the Egyptians. And the famine grew very severe in the land of Egypt. ⁵⁷And all countries came to Joseph in Egypt to buy *grain*, because the famine was so severe in every land.

42 Now when Jacob saw that there was grain in Egypt, Jacob said to his sons, “Why are you looking at one another?” ²And he said, “Look, I have heard that there is grain in Egypt. Get yourselves down there and buy *grain* for us from there, so that we can live, and not die”.

³And ten brothers of Joseph went down to buy grain in Egypt. ⁴But Jacob did not send Joseph’s brother Benjamin with his brothers, for he said, “Perhaps some harm may come to him”. ⁵So among those who came to *Egypt*, the sons of Israel *also* came to buy *grain*, for the famine was in the land of Canaan.

41:38 Compare Dan 4:8-9,18; 5:11,14.

41:40 Note at 39:6. Compare 1 Sam 2:7-8; Ps 75:6-7; 113:7-8; Jam 4:10.

41:41 Compare Dan 2:48; 5:29; 6:3.

41:42 “*Ring*”– note at Esther 3:10.

41:43 Compare Esther 6:6-11.

41:44 Ps 105:21-22.

41:45 This new name of Joseph means “revealer of secrets”.

41:46 See 37:2. Joseph had been in Egypt thirteen years.

41:47 “*By handfuls*”– this indicates great abundance; wherever one looked handfuls of grain could be picked up.

41:51 Manasseh probably means “causing to forget”.

41:52 Ephraim means “twice fruitful” or “much fruitfulness”. In giving both names Joseph was remembering God’s goodness to him in the place of his troubles. If we view matters as he did we will have more joy in the world, this place of our suffering.

41:55 Verses 41,44.

41:57 “*All countries*”– this means those civilized lands known to the people in that part of the world. It included Canaan.

42:4 Benjamin was the only son of Jacob’s beloved wife Rachel left in Canaan.

⁶And Joseph was the ruler over the land, and he was the one who sold *grain* to all the people of the land. And Joseph's brothers came, and bowed themselves before him with *their* faces to the earth.

⁷And Joseph saw his brothers and recognized them, but acted like a stranger to them, speaking roughly to them. And he said to them, "Where have you come from?" And they said, "From the land of Canaan to buy food".

⁸And Joseph recognized his brothers, but they did not recognize him. ⁹And Joseph remembered the dreams which he had about them, and said to them, "You *are* spies! You have come to see the unprotected *parts* of the land".

¹⁰And they said to him, "No, my lord, but your servants have come to buy food. ¹¹We *are* all the sons of one man. We, your servants, *are* honest *men*, not spies".

¹²And he said to them, "No! You have come to see the unprotected *parts* of the land".

¹³And they said, "Your servants *are* twelve brothers, the sons of one man in the land of Canaan. See, today the youngest *is* with our father, and one *is* no more".

¹⁴And Joseph said to them, "It *is* just as I told you *when I* said, You *are* spies. ¹⁵This is how you will be tested: By the life of Pharaoh you will not go out of here unless your youngest brother comes here. ¹⁶Send one of you, and let him bring your brother. And you will be kept in prison, so that your words can be tested, *to see if there is* any truth in you. Or else by the life of Pharaoh

you *are* surely spies". ¹⁷And he put them all together in custody for three days.

¹⁸And on the third day Joseph said to them, "Do this and live, *for I* fear God: ¹⁹If you *are* honest *men*, let one of your brothers be confined in the prison *where you are*. *Then* you go and take grain for the famine in your houses. ²⁰But bring your youngest brother to me. So your words will be verified, and you will not die". And they did so.

²¹And they said to one another, "We *are*, in fact, guilty about our brother, for we saw the pain of his soul when he pled with us, and we would not listen. Therefore this distress has come on us". ²²And Reuben answered them, saying, "Did I not tell you, saying 'Do not sin against the boy?' And you would not listen. So see, his blood is being accounted for". ²³And they did not know that Joseph understood *them*, for he spoke to them through an interpreter.

²⁴And he turned away from them and wept. Then he turned back to them and talked with them. And he took Simeon from them, and tied him up him before their eyes.

²⁵Then Joseph gave a command to fill their sacks with grain and to return each one's money to his sack, and to give them provision for the road. And this was done for them. ²⁶And they loaded their donkeys with the grain and left there.

²⁷And when one *of them* opened his sack at the inn to feed his donkey, he saw his money, for there it was in his sack's mouth. ²⁸And he said to his brothers, "My money has been returned, and lo *and behold*, it's

42:6 37:7-10.

42:7 Joseph was not unforgiving (45:4-5). Evidently he waited to see if they had repented of their sin against him (37:18,28).

42:8 "Did not recognize him"— they had not seen Joseph for at least twenty years (37:2; 41:46,53). Moreover, they thought he was dead (v 13; 44:20). And they could never have imagined he would be ruler in Egypt. Also Joseph would have been shaven and dressed in the manner of Egypt.

42:9 "Dreams"— 37:5-9. He remembered God's revealed will as given in his dreams, and their reaction to him then — hatred. And so he spoke as he did. But the rest of the story shows that it was not revenge he had in mind.

42:10 "Lord"— 37:8.

42:18 "Fear God"— this was the secret of Joseph's wise and godly way of life. Notes on the fear of God at 20:11; Ps 34:11-14; 111:10; Prov 1:7.

42:21 "Brother"— they were referring to Joseph

— 37:26-28. Repentance was beginning to do its work in them. This is what Joseph was wanting to see. And it was very important to him (and to God) that he see it. Compare God's dealing with the people of Israel (and, no doubt, with many since) — Hos 5:15; Jer 3:12-13. If we desire God's blessing we must not try to cover up and forget our sins (Prov 28:13). Note on repentance at Matt 3:2.

42:22 "Boy"— 37:21-22.

"Blood"— they thought Joseph had died (v 13; 44:20), and they knew the penalty for what they had done — 9:5-6.

42:24 "Wept"— 43:30; 45:14-15. Joseph was deeply moved to see repentance at work in them (indeed, God Himself always is moved when He sees repentance — Luke 15:7,10). But evidently Joseph did not think the work was complete or that the right time had come to reveal his identity to them.

42:25 For Joseph's purpose see v28 and 43:18,22.

in my sack!” And their heart failed *them*, and they were afraid, saying to one another, “What *is* this *that* God has done to us?”

²⁹And they came to Jacob their father in the land of Canaan, and told him all that had happened to them, saying, ³⁰“The man *who is* the lord of the land spoke roughly to us, and took us for spies in the country. ³¹And we said to him, ‘We are honest men, we are not spies. ³²We *are* twelve brothers, sons of our father. One *is* no *more*, and today the youngest *is* with our father in the land of Canaan.’ ³³And the man, the lord of the country, said to us, ‘This is how I will know that you *are* honest *men*: leave one of your brothers with me, and take *food* for the famine in your households, and go, ³⁴and bring your youngest brother to me. Then I will know that you *are* not spies, but *that* you are honest. *Then* I will hand over your brother to you, and you can trade in the land.’ ”

³⁵And when they emptied their sacks, it happened that, there, in his sack, was each man’s bundle of money. And when they and their father saw the bundles of money, they were afraid. ³⁶And their father Jacob said to them, “You have deprived me of my children: Joseph is no *more*, and Simeon is not *here*, and you will take Benjamin away. All these things are against me”.

³⁷And Reuben spoke to his father, saying, “If I don’t bring him to you, *then* kill my two sons! Give him into my hand, and I will bring him back to you”.

³⁸And he said, “My son shall not go down with you! For his brother is dead, and he is left alone. If harm comes to him along the way you are going, then you will bring down my gray hairs with sorrow to the grave”.

43 And the famine was severe in the land. ²And when they had eaten up the grain they had brought from Egypt, it came about that their father said to them, “Go again, buy us a little food”.

³And Judah spoke to him, saying, “The man solemnly warned us, saying, ‘You will

not see my face unless your brother *is* with you.’ ⁴If you will send our brother with us, we will go down and buy you food. ⁵But if you will not send *him*, we will not go down, for the man said to us, ‘You will not see my face unless your brother *is* with you.’ ”

⁶And Israel said, “Why did you treat me so badly, telling the man whether you had *another* brother?”

⁷And they said, “The man asked us particularly about our situation, and about our relatives, saying, ‘*Is* your father still alive? Do you have another brother?’ And we informed him in accordance with *his* words. Could we possibly know that he would say, ‘Bring your brother down?’ ”

⁸And Judah said to his father Israel, “Send the boy with me, and we will arise and go, so that we can live, and not die, both we, and you, and our little ones too. ⁹I will be the guarantee for him. You can demand him from my hand. If I do not bring him to you, and place him before you, then let me bear the blame forever. ¹⁰For if we had not delayed, surely by now we would have returned this second time”.

¹¹And their father Israel said to them, “If *now it has to be* so, do this: Take *some* of the best fruits in the land in your containers, and take down a present for the man, a little balm, and a little honey, spices, and myrrh, nuts, and almonds. ¹²And in your hand take double the money, and the money that was brought back in the mouth of your sacks, take it back in your hand. Perhaps it was an oversight. ¹³Take your brother also, and arise, go back to the man. ¹⁴And God Almighty give you mercy in the man’s presence, so that he may send your other brother and Benjamin away. If I am deprived of my children, I am deprived”.

¹⁵And the men took that present, and in their hand they took double the money, and Benjamin, and rose up, and went down to Egypt, and stood before Joseph. ¹⁶And when Joseph saw Benjamin with them, he said to the steward of his house, “Take

42:28 “*God*”—they realized that God was working in a strange way and they feared He was going to bring about their punishment.

42:34 “*Trade*”—or it could possibly mean “move about freely”.

42:36 It seems that Jacob held his sons responsible for Joseph’s disappearance.

“*Against me*”—Jacob had not learned what his son Joseph had learned (45:5-7; 50:20), and what Paul later learned (Rom 8:31).

42:37 See 37:21-22.

42:38 “*Left alone*”—did Jacob sometimes count only Joseph and Benjamin his sons because they alone were born to Rachel (33:2; 44:27)? This favoritism was unwise (25:28; 27:1).

43:3 42:20.

43:9 42:37.

43:14 “*God Almighty*”—El-Shaddai. Note at 17:1. “*Mercy*”—compare Ex 3:21; Neh 1:11; Prov 21:1. “*Deprived*”—compare Esther 4:16.

these men home, and slaughter *an animal*, and prepare *a meal*, for these men will eat with me at noon”.

¹⁷And the man did as Joseph ordered, and the man took the men to Joseph’s house. ¹⁸And the men were afraid, because they were taken to Joseph’s house, and they said, “We are brought in *here* because of the money that was returned to our sacks the first time, so that he can find an opportunity to attack us and seize us as slaves along with our donkeys”.

¹⁹And they approached the steward of Joseph’s house and talked with him at the door of the house, ²⁰and said, “O sir, we certainly did come down the first time to buy food, ²¹and after we arrived at the inn, it so happened that we opened our sacks, and there in the mouth of the sack was *each* man’s money, our money in full weight. And we have brought it back in our hand. ²²And we have brought down other money in our hands to buy food. We don’t know who put our money in our sacks”.

²³And he said, “You *be* at peace. Don’t be afraid. Your God, and the God of your father, has given you the treasure in your sacks. I had your money”. And he brought Simeon out to them.

²⁴And the man brought the men into Joseph’s house, and gave *them* water, and they washed their feet. And he gave feed for their donkeys. ²⁵And they prepared the present for the coming of Joseph at noon, for they heard that they would be eating bread there.

²⁶And when Joseph came home, they brought out to him the present which they had in the house, and bowed down to him to the ground. ²⁷And he asked them about *their* welfare, and said, “Is your father well, the old man of whom you spoke? Is he still alive?”

²⁸And they answered, “Your servant our father *is* in good health, he *is* still alive”.

43:18-22 Joseph’s purpose in 42:35 is being fulfilled. His brothers are being humbled.

43:23 “*God*”– 42:28.
“*Simeon*”– 42:24.

43:26 “*Ground*”– v 28; 37:7,10.

43:29 “*Mother’s son*”– Benjamin was Joseph’s only full brother. The others, born of other mothers, were half-brothers.

43:30 Joseph was obviously a man of tender heart.

43:32 “*Abomination*”– compare Ex 8:26; John 4:9.

43:33 “*Amazement*”– they wondered how Joseph could know their ages.

And they bent their heads, and bowed down.

²⁹And he raised his eyes, and saw his brother Benjamin, his mother’s son, and said, “Is this your younger brother, of whom you spoke to me?” And he said, “God be gracious to you, my son”. ³⁰And Joseph hurried out, for his heart was moved for his brother, and he looked for *a place* to weep. And he went into *his* room and wept there.

³¹And he washed his face and went out, and restrained himself, and said, “Put the bread on”.

³²And they put *it* on for him by himself, and for them by themselves, and for the Egyptians, who were eating with him, by themselves, because the Egyptians could not eat bread with the Hebrews, for that *is* an abomination to the Egyptians. ³³And they were seated in his presence, the firstborn according to his birthright, and the youngest according to his youth, and the men looked at one another in amazement. ³⁴And *Joseph* took and sent portions to them from his *own table*, but Benjamin’s portion was five times as much as any of theirs. And they drank, and were happy with him.

44 And he commanded the steward of his house, saying, “Fill the men’s sacks with food, as much as they can carry, and put each man’s money in his sack’s mouth. ²And put my cup, the silver cup, in the sack’s mouth of the youngest, and his grain money”. And he did according to Joseph’s spoken command.

³As soon as it was light, the men were sent away, they and their donkeys. ⁴When they had gone out of the city, *but* not yet far off, Joseph said to his steward, “Up, follow the men. And when you catch up to them, say to them, ‘Why have you rewarded evil for good? ⁵Is not this *cup the one* my lord drinks out of, and indeed which he uses for divination? You have done wrong in doing this.’ ”

44:1-2 See 42:25,28; 43:18-22. Joseph now hopes for a further work of God in his brothers producing deeper repentance and humility. See note at 42:21.

44:5 Verse 15. Later in history, divination was forbidden to God’s people (Lev 19:26; Deut 18:10-12; 2 Kings 17:17). If Joseph practiced such a thing surely it was in ignorance that God was displeased with it. But it is possible that he actually had nothing to do with divination, and in v 15 was merely speaking as his brothers would expect him to speak as an Egyptian.

⁶And he caught up to them, and spoke to them these same words. ⁷And they said to him, “Why is my master saying these words? Far be it from your servants to do such a thing. ⁸See, the money which we found in our sacks’ mouths, we brought back to you from the land of Canaan. How then could we steal silver or gold from your master’s house? ⁹Whoever of your servants it is found with, let him die, and we also will be my lord’s slaves”.

¹⁰And he said, “Now also *let it be* according to your words. The one with whom it is found will be my servant, and *the rest of you* will be blameless”.

¹¹Then quickly each one put his sack down on the ground, and each one opened his sack. ¹²And he searched, beginning at the eldest, and leaving off at the youngest. And the cup was found in Benjamin’s sack. ¹³Then they tore their clothes, and each one loaded his donkey, and they returned to the city.

¹⁴And Judah and his brothers came to Joseph’s house, for he was still there. And in his presence they fell on the ground. ¹⁵And Joseph said to them, “What deed *is* this that you have done? Don’t you know that such a man as I can certainly divine?”

¹⁶And Judah said, “What shall we say to my lord? What shall we speak? Or how shall we clear ourselves? God has found out the wickedness of your servants. See, we are my lord’s servants, both we, and also *the one* with whom the cup was found”.

¹⁷And he said, “Far be it from me to do so. The man in whose hand the cup was found, he will be my servant. As for you, go on in peace to your father”.

¹⁸Then Judah approached him and said, “Oh my lord, please let your servant speak a word in my lord’s ears, and let not your anger burn against your servant, for you *are* just like Pharaoh. ¹⁹My lord asked his servants, saying, ‘Do you have a father, or a brother?’ ²⁰And we said to my lord, ‘We

have a father, an old man, and *there is* a son of *his* old age, *who is* young. And his brother is dead, and he alone is left of his mother’s *children*, and his father loves him.’

²¹“And you said to your servants, ‘Bring him down to me, so that I can see him.’ ²²And we said to my lord, ‘The boy cannot leave his father, for *if* he leaves *his father*, his father would die.’ ²³And you said to your servants, ‘Unless your youngest brother comes down with you, you will see my face no more.’ ²⁴And when we went to your servant my father, it came about that we told him the words of my lord.

²⁵“And our father said, ‘Go back, *and buy* us a little food.’ ²⁶And we said, ‘We cannot go down. If our youngest brother is with us, then we will go down, for we cannot see the man’s face unless our youngest brother is with us.’

²⁷“And your servant my father said to us, ‘You know that my wife bore me two sons. ²⁸And the one went away from me, and I said, “Surely he is torn in pieces”, and I haven’t seen him since. ²⁹And if you also take this one from me, and harm comes to him, you will bring down my gray hairs with sorrow to the grave.’

³⁰“So now when I go to your servant my father, and the boy *is* not with us, since his life is bound up in the boy’s life, ³¹this is what will happen: When he sees that the boy *is* not *with us*, he will die, your servants will bring down the gray hairs of your servant our father with sorrow to the grave. ³²For your servant became the guarantee for the boy to my father, saying, ‘If I do not bring him to you, then I will bear the blame before my father forever.’

³³“So now, please, instead of the boy, let your servant stay as a slave to my lord, and let the boy go up with his brothers. ³⁴For how can I go to my father when the boy *is* not with me? Then I would have to see the misery that would come on my father”.

44:7 “*Far be it from*”– “God forbid” (KJV) is not in the Hebrew here.

44:13 Tearing clothes indicated shock or grief.

44:14 37:7,10.

44:15 “*Divine*”– note on v 5.

44:16 “*Wickedness*”– 42:28. Joseph must have been delighted to hear them speak so.

44:20 “*Father loves him*”– Judah shows a concern for his father’s feelings which he did not show before (37:31-35). In fact, the brothers as a whole seem chastened, softened men.

44:27 “*My wife*”– he meant Rachel. Did he count only her as his wife and not the three others? (She was the one he loved, and the only one he really wanted to marry – 29:18,20,30,31.)

44:29 “*Grave*”– Sheol – note at 37:35.

44:33-34 What has happened to the hard man of former years? Surely this speech of Judah’s, showing his compassion and willingness to suffer for another, was like music in Joseph’s ears. See how God works to change people’s hearts and attitudes.

45 Then Joseph could not restrain himself before all those who stood near him, and he cried out, “Get everyone away from me”. So no one was standing near him when Joseph made himself known to his brothers. ²And he wept aloud, and the Egyptians and the household of Pharaoh heard *it*.

³And Joseph said to his brothers, “I *am* Joseph. Is my father still living?” And his brothers could not answer him, for they were alarmed in his presence.

⁴And Joseph said to his brothers, “Please come near me”. And they came near. And he said, “I *am* your brother Joseph, whom you sold into Egypt. ⁵So do not be grieved now, or angry with yourselves because you sold me here, for God sent me before you to preserve life. ⁶For these two years the famine *has been* in the land, and *there are* still five years in which *there will be* neither plowing nor reaping. ⁷And God sent me before you to preserve descendants on the earth for you, and to save your lives by a great deliverance.

⁸“So now *it was* not you *who* sent me here, but God. And he has made me *like* a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house, and a ruler throughout all the land of Egypt. ⁹Hurry, and go up to my father, and say to him, ‘This is what your son Joseph says, God has made me lord of all Egypt. Come down to me. Do not delay. ¹⁰And you will live in the land of Goshen, and you will be near me, you, and your children, and your grandchildren, and your flocks, and your herds, and all that you have. ¹¹And I will provide for you there, so that you and your household do not come to destitution, for there *will be* five more years of famine.’

¹²“And, look, your eyes, and the eyes of my brother Benjamin, *can* see that *it is* my

mouth that is speaking to you. ¹³And you must tell my father of all my glory in Egypt, and of all that you have seen. And you must hurry and bring my father down here”.

¹⁴And he fell on his brother Benjamin’s neck, and wept; and Benjamin wept on his neck. ¹⁵And he kissed all his brothers, and wept over them. After that his brothers talked with him.

¹⁶And *someone took* the news of this to Pharaoh’s house, saying, “Joseph’s brothers have come”. And it pleased Pharaoh and his servants.

¹⁷And Pharaoh said to Joseph, “Say to your brothers, ‘Do like this: load up your animals and go to the land of Canaan. ¹⁸And bring your father and your households and come to me, and I will give you the best of the land of Egypt, and you will eat the fat of the land. ¹⁹Now you are commanded. Do like this: Take wagons from the land of Egypt for your little ones, and for your wives, and bring your father, and come. ²⁰Also do not be concerned about your possessions, for the best of all the land of Egypt *is yours*.’ ”

²¹And the children of Israel did so. Joseph gave them wagons, according to the command of Pharaoh, and gave them provisions for the road. ²²To each and every one of them he gave changes of clothing, but to Benjamin he gave three hundred *pieces* of silver, and five changes of clothing. ²³And he sent these *things* for his father: ten donkeys loaded with the good things of Egypt, and ten female donkeys loaded with grain and bread and food for his father on the road. ²⁴So he sent his brothers away, and as they were leaving he said to them, “See that you do not quarrel on the way”.

²⁵And they went up out of Egypt, and came into the land of Canaan to their father Jacob, ²⁶and told him *the news*, saying, “Joseph

45:2 42:24; 43:30.

45:3 They remembered their sin (37:4-5,28; 42:21-22).

45:5-8 Joseph looked beyond his afflictions and the sin of his brothers, and saw the hand of God working good. He had a wonderfully clear and true view of God’s complete sovereignty in the affairs of men, and believed the truth of Rom 8:28 before Paul ever wrote it. Note at 50:20.

45:10 Goshen was a choice part of Egypt and very fertile – v 20.

45:14 “*Wept*”– though a very powerful man in a great kingdom, Joseph was not ashamed of tears. Eight times in chapters 42–50 his weeping

is spoken of. Compare Isa 53:3; Luke 19:41; John 11:35.

45:15 “*Talked with him*”– tears can convince others of loving concern when nothing else can.

45:18 “*The land*”– they had hated him and plotted against him slavery and death. In return he gave them the best the land could offer. In this he is an example of how men should behave. Compare Matt 5:44-45; 7:12. See 1 Pet 2:19-24.

45:22 “*Three hundred pieces of silver*”– about 3.5 kilograms.

45:24 “*Quarrel on the way*”– Joseph knew their nature. And he now wanted them to forget the past and make a new beginning.

is still alive, and he is the ruler over all the land of Egypt". And Jacob's heart became numb, because he did not believe them. ²⁷And they told him all of Joseph's words which he had said to them. And when he saw the wagons which Joseph had sent to carry him, the spirit of their father Jacob revived, ²⁸and Israel said, "*It is enough. My son Joseph is still alive! I will go and see him before I die*".

46 And Israel set out with all that he had and came to Beersheba, and offered sacrifices to the God of his father Isaac.

²And God spoke to Israel in visions by night, and said, "Jacob, Jacob".

And he said, "Here I am".

³And he said, "I *am* God, the God of your father. Do not be afraid to go down to Egypt, for I will there make of you a great nation. ⁴I will go down with you to Egypt, and I will also surely bring you up *again*. And Joseph will put his hand on yours eyes".

⁵And Jacob arose from Beersheba, and the sons of Israel carried Jacob their father, and their little ones, and their wives, in the wagons which Pharaoh had sent to carry him. ⁶And they took their livestock, and their goods, which they had gotten in the land of Canaan, and came into Egypt, Jacob, and all his offspring with him. ⁷He brought with him to Egypt his sons, and his grandsons, his daughters, and his sons' daughters, and all his descendants.

⁸And these are the names of the children of Israel, who came to Egypt, Jacob and his sons. Reuben was Jacob's firstborn; ⁹and the sons of Reuben were Hanoch, Phallu, Hezron, and Carmi. ¹⁰And the sons of Simeon: Jemuel, Jamin, Ohad, Jachin, Zohar, and Shaul the son of a Canaanite woman. ¹¹And the sons of Levi: Gershon, Kohath, and Merari. ¹²And the sons of Judah: Er, Onan, Shelah, Perez, and Zerah (but Er and Onan died in the land of Canaan); and the sons of Perez were Hezron and Hamul.

45:26 "*Got numb*"— this is a literal translation of the Hebrew.

46:1 Beersheba is in the southern part of Canaan. His father Isaac had also offered sacrifices there (26:23-25).

46:2 "*Visions*"— note at 15:1.

"*Jacob! Jacob!*"— see 32:28; 35:10. But Israel did not lose his Jacob nature until he died and perhaps here needed to be reminded of it.

46:3 "*Great nation*"— 12:2.

46:4 "*With you*"— see 28:15. All is well if God

¹³And the sons of Issachar: Tola, Phuvah, Job, and Shimron. ¹⁴And the sons of Zebulun: Sered, Elon, and Jahleel.

¹⁵These were the sons of Leah, whom she bore to Jacob in Padan Aram, besides his daughter Dinah. All these sons and daughters of his *numbered* thirty-three.

¹⁶And *these* were the sons of Gad: Ziphion, Haggi, Shuni, Ezbon, Eri, Arodi, and Areli.

¹⁷And the sons of Asher were Imnah, Ishuah, Isui, Beriah, and Serah their sister; and the sons of Beriah were Heber, and Malchiel.

¹⁸These were the sons of Zilpah, whom Laban gave to Leah his daughter, whom she bore to Jacob. *The total* was sixteen persons.

¹⁹The sons of Jacob's wife Rachel were Joseph and Benjamin. ²⁰And Manasseh and Ephraim were born to Joseph in the land of Egypt. Asenath, the daughter of Potipherah priest of On, bore them to him.

²¹And the sons of Benjamin were Belah, Becher, Ashbel, Gera, Naaman, Ehi, Rosh, Muppim, Huppim, and Ard.

²²These were the sons of Rachel, who were born to Jacob. The total of these persons was fourteen.

²³And the son of Dan was Hushim.

²⁴And the sons of Naphtali were Jahzeel, Guni, Jezer, and Shillem.

²⁵These were the sons of Bilhah, whom Laban gave to his daughter Rachel, and she bore them to Jacob. The total of these persons was seven.

²⁶All the people who came with Jacob to Egypt, who came from his body, besides the wives of Jacob's sons, the total *number* of persons was sixty-six. ²⁷And the sons of Joseph, who were born to him in Egypt, were two persons. *So* all the people of the household of Jacob, who came to Egypt, were seventy.

²⁸And he sent Judah before him to Joseph, so he could appear before him in Goshen. And they went on to the land of Goshen.

goes with us where we go (Ps 23:4).

46:5 Notice the mixture of Jacob's two names. This is seen also in v 8; 47:28-29; 48:2; 49:33; and 50:2.

46:12 "*Er and Onan*"— these two died in Canaan (38:7,10).

46:13 "*Job*"— or "Iob" or "Jashub".

46:15 "*Padan-Aram*"— 25:20.

46:26-27 Sixty-six persons came with Jacob; Joseph and his two sons were already in Egypt. This total comes to 69. Counting Jacob the total is 70.

²⁹And Joseph prepared his chariot, and went out to Goshen to meet his father Israel, and presented himself to him. And he fell on his neck, and wept on his neck a long time.

³⁰And Israel said to Joseph, “Now let me die, since I have seen your face, because you are still alive”.

³¹And Joseph said to his brothers and to his father’s household, “I will go up and tell Pharaoh and say to him, ‘My brothers and my father’s household, who were in the land of Canaan, have come to me. ³²And the men are shepherds, for they have been keepers of livestock, and they have brought their flocks, and their herds, and all that they have.’ ³³And it will come about that Pharaoh will call you and will say, ‘What is your occupation?’ ³⁴Then you must say, ‘Your servants have been keepers of livestock from our youth up to now, both we and our fathers.’ *Do this* so that you can live in the land of Goshen, because every shepherd is an abomination to the Egyptians”.

47 Then Joseph came and told Pharaoh, saying, “My father and my brothers, and their flocks, and their herds, and all that they have, have come from the land of Canaan, and now are in the land of Goshen”.

²And he took five men from among his brothers, and presented them to Pharaoh.

³And Pharaoh said to his brothers, “What is your occupation?” And they said to Pharaoh, “Your servants are shepherds, both we and our fathers”.

⁴They also said to Pharaoh, “We have

come to stay in the land for a time, for your servants had no pasture for their flocks, because the famine is severe in the land of Canaan. Therefore, please let your servants stay now in the land of Goshen”.

⁵And Pharaoh spoke to Joseph, saying, “Your father and your brothers have come to you. ⁶The land of Egypt is before you. Have your father and brothers live in the best of the land. Have them live in the land of Goshen, and if you know any men of ability among them, then put them in charge of my livestock”.

⁷And Joseph brought in his father Jacob, and placed him before Pharaoh. And Jacob blessed Pharaoh. ⁸And Pharaoh said to Jacob, “How old are you?”

⁹And Jacob said to Pharaoh, “The days of the years of my pilgrimage are a hundred and thirty years. The days of the years of my life have been few and difficult, and they have not attained to the days of the years of the life of my fathers in the days of their pilgrimage”.

¹⁰And Jacob blessed Pharaoh, and went out from the presence of Pharaoh.

¹¹And Joseph settled his father and his brothers, and gave them a possession in the land of Egypt, in the best of the land, in the land of Rameses, as Pharaoh had commanded. ¹²And Joseph provided bread for his father and his brothers, and all his father’s household, according to their families.

¹³And there was no bread in all the land, for the famine was very severe, so that the land of Egypt and the whole land of

46:29 “Wept”– 45:14.

46:31-34 It would seem from this that Joseph wanted all the people of Israel to be kept separate in the region of Goshen. Possibly he did not want them to be put in a city or to mingle too closely with the Egyptians and learn their ways. So he advised his brothers to speak out frankly and tell Pharaoh that they were shepherds, “an abomination to the Egyptians”.

47:4 “Goshen”– this area was very fertile and the land good for grazing flocks and herds.

47:6 “men of ability” or “Capable men”– knowing Joseph he could believe that some of his brothers might have some good sense and skill.

47:7 “Blessed”– the Hebrew word may also be translated “greeted”.

47:9 “Difficult”– 31:40-42; 42:36,38; Job 5:7; 14:1.

“Fathers”– Abraham lived to be 175; Isaac to 180. At this time Jacob was only 130 (v 28).

“Pilgrimage”– Heb 11:9,13.

47:10 “Blessed”– the Hebrew word may also mean

“said farewell to”.

47:11 45:18. Joseph did more than make promises. He did what many do not do – he fulfilled them.

47:13-26 Under Joseph the power of the state increased enormously. All the land and then all the people became Pharaoh’s property. Perhaps this was best to meet the crisis of that time of terrible famine. But it is very doubtful whether it worked for the future prosperity of Egypt. When the state owns everything, personal liberties and initiative are stifled and the people as a whole will suffer. But what happened in Egypt is a picture of a certain important spiritual truth later made clear to the people of Israel. God told them that all the land of Israel and all the people belonged to Him, and He was responsible for their welfare as long as they kept His covenant – Ex 7:4; 19:5; Lev 25:23; Deut 7:6. In the same way now believers together with all they have belong to God, being purchased by the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ – 1 Cor 6:19-20.

Canaan fainted by reason of the famine. ¹⁴And Joseph gathered all the money that was found in the land of Egypt, and in the land of Canaan, for the grain which they bought. And Joseph brought the money to Pharaoh's house. ¹⁵And when there was no more money in the land of Egypt and in the land of Canaan, all the Egyptians came to Joseph and said, "Give us bread, for why should we die in your presence? For the money is gone".

¹⁶And Joseph said, "Give your livestock, and I will give you *grain* for your cattle, since your money is gone". ¹⁷And they brought their livestock to Joseph, and Joseph gave them bread *in exchange* for horses and for the flocks and for the herds of livestock, and for the donkeys. And that year he fed them with bread for all their livestock.

¹⁸When that year was over, they came to him the second year, and said to him, "We will not hide it from my lord, that our money is spent. My lord also has our herds of livestock. There is nothing left in the sight of my lord, but our bodies and our lands. ¹⁹So shall we perish before your eyes, both we and our land? Buy us and our land for bread, and we and our land will be servants to Pharaoh. And give *us* seed *grain* so that we can live and not die, so that the land will not be desolate".

²⁰And Joseph bought all the land of Egypt for Pharaoh. For each one of the Egyptians sold his field, because the famine had overcome them. So the land became Pharaoh's. ²¹And as for the people, he moved them to cities from *one* end of the borders of Egypt to its *other* end. ²²But he did not buy the land of the priests, because the priests had an allotment *assigned to them* by Pharaoh, and ate their allotment which Pharaoh gave them. Therefore they did not sell their lands.

²³Then Joseph said to the people, "Look, today I have bought you and your land for Pharaoh. See, *here is* seed for you, and you must sow the land. ²⁴And it must be that you give a fifth part of the crop to Pharaoh,

and four parts will be your own as seed for the field, and for your food, and for those of your households, and for food for your little ones".

²⁵And they said, "You have saved our lives. Let us find favour in the sight of my lord, and we will be Pharaoh's servants".

²⁶And Joseph made it a law in the land of Egypt, *in force* to this day, *that* Pharaoh would have the fifth part of *all crops*, except for the land of the priests, *which* did not become Pharaoh's.

²⁷And Israel lived in the land of Egypt, in the region of Goshen, and they had possessions there, and grew, and greatly increased *in number*.

²⁸And Jacob lived in the land of Egypt seventeen years, so the total age of Jacob was a hundred and forty-seven years. ²⁹And the time drew near for Israel to die, and he called his son Joseph and said to him, "If now I have found favour in your sight, please place your hand under my thigh, and deal kindly and faithfully with me. Please do not bury me in Egypt, ³⁰but when I rest with my fathers, you must carry me out of Egypt, and bury me in their burial site".

And he said, "I will do as you say".

³¹And he said, "Swear to me". And he swore to him. And Israel bowed down at the head of the bed.

48 And after these things, it came about that some one told Joseph, "Look, your father *is sick*". And he took with him his two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim. ²And someone told Jacob, and said, "Look, your son Joseph is coming to you". And Israel summoned his strength and sat up on the bed.

³And Jacob said to Joseph, "God Almighty appeared to me at Luz in the land of Canaan, and blessed me, ⁴and said to me, 'Look, I will make you fruitful, and increase you *in number*, and I will make of you a multitude of people, and will give this land to your offspring after you as an everlasting possession.'

47:27 46:3.

47:29 "Thigh"— note 24:2.

47:31 "Bowed down"— referred to in Heb 11:21 as an example of Jacob's faith. Heb 11:21 applies to all of Gen 48. Also, Gen 48 seems to have occurred at some point after Gen 47:21 as Gen 48 begins with the words, "After these things it

came about that someone told Joseph, 'Look, your father is sick'.

48:1 "Ephraim"— 41:51-52.

48:3 "God Almighty"— El-Shaddai — note at 17:1.

"Luz"— Bethel (28:19).

48:4 "Said"— 28:13-14.

⁵“And now your two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, who were born to you in the land of Egypt before I came to you in Egypt, are mine. Just like Reuben and Simeon, they will be mine. ⁶And your children who will be born to you after them will be yours, and will be called by the name of their brothers in their inheritance. ⁷And as for me, when I came from Padan, Rachel died by my side on the way in the land of Canaan, while still just a little way before coming to Ephrath. And I buried her there by the Ephrath road. That is Bethlehem”.

⁸And Israel saw Joseph’s sons, and said, “Who are these?”

⁹And Joseph said to his father, “They are my sons, whom God has given me in this place”. And he said, “Please bring them to me, and I will bless them”.

¹⁰Now Israel’s eyes were dim because of age, so that he could not see. And he brought them near to him, and he kissed them, and embraced them.

¹¹And Israel said to Joseph, “I had not thought to see your face, and lo *and behold*, God has showed me your offspring too”.

¹²And Joseph brought them out from between his knees, and bowed down with his face to the ground. ¹³And Joseph took them both, Ephraim in his right hand toward Israel’s left hand, and Manasseh in his left hand toward Israel’s right hand, and brought them near him. ¹⁴And Israel stretched out his right hand, and laid it on the head of Ephraim, who was the younger, and his left hand on the head of Manasseh, crossing his hands. For Manasseh was the firstborn.

¹⁵ And he blessed Joseph, and said,
“God, in whose presence my fathers
Abraham and Isaac walked,
the God who has been my shepherd

all my life to this day,

¹⁶ The Angel who delivered me
from all evil, bless the lads.

And let them be called by my name,
and the name of my fathers
Abraham and Isaac.

And let them grow into a multitude
among the peoples of the earth”.

¹⁷And when Joseph saw that his father laid his right hand on the head of Ephraim, it displeased him, and he took hold of his father’s hand, to remove it from Ephraim’s head to Manasseh’s head. ¹⁸And Joseph said to his father, “Not like that, my father, for this is the firstborn. Put your right hand on his head”.

¹⁹And his father refused, and said, “I know it, my son, I know it. He too will become a people, and he too will be great, but in fact his younger brother will be greater than he, and his offspring will become a multitude of nations”. ²⁰And he blessed them that day, saying, “Israel will pronounce a blessing in your name, saying, ‘God make you like Ephraim and Manasseh.’ ” And he put Ephraim before Manasseh.

²¹And Israel said to Joseph, “Look, I am dying, but God will be with you, and bring you again to the land of your fathers. ²²And I have given to you one portion more than your brothers, which I took from the hand of the Amorite with my sword and with my bow”.

49 And Jacob called to his sons, and said, “Assemble yourselves, so that I can tell you what will happen to you in the last days.

² “Assemble yourselves and hear,
you sons of Jacob, and listen
to your father Israel.

³ “Reuben, you are my firstborn,

48:5 1 Chron 5:1-2. Joseph’s sons became the fathers of two of the twelve tribes of Israel who divided and possessed the land of Canaan. Levi received no inheritance in the land.

48:9 “Bless”– 27:4.

48:14 Verses 17-20; Heb 11:21. The tribe of Ephraim became the most powerful in the northern kingdom of Israel after the kingdom divided in the time of Rehoboam.

48:15 “Shepherd”– this was true even when Jacob was least aware of it. On shepherd see Ps 23:1; 78:52; 80:1; 95:7; 100:3; John 10:11-16.

48:16 “Angel”– note at 16:7.

48:20 “Manasseh”– v 14. The blessings spoken of these founders of the nation of Israel were given

by direction of the Spirit of God and foretold the future. See 9:25-27; 27:33; 49:1.

48:22 “I took... my bow”– the event he speaks of is not recorded in the Bible, unless Jacob is referring to the events of 34:25-29.

49:1 In this chapter Jacob is speaking as a prophet. In v 28 these predictions are called blessings. Blessings (or curses) spoken by inspiration of God were actually prophecies of the future. Compare 9:25-27; chapter 27.

49:3-4 35:22; Deut 27:20; 1 Chron 5:1. Afterwards the tribe of Reuben was never noted for leadership or greatness. No judge, no prophet, no great leader of the people named in the Bible came from Reuben.

my might, and the beginning
of my strength,
excelling in dignity,
and excelling in power.
⁴ Unstable as water,
you will not excel,
because you went up to
your father's bed;
then you defiled it.
He went up to my couch.
⁵ "Simeon and Levi are brothers.
Instruments of violence are
in their habitations.
⁶ O my soul, do not come
into their secret.
Do not be united with
their assembly,
my honour, do not be united.
For in their anger
they slew a man,
and in their self-will they
dug down a wall.
⁷ Cursed *be* their anger,
for *it was* fierce;
and their wrath,
for it was cruel.
I will divide them in Jacob,
and scatter them in Israel.
⁸ "Judah, you *are the one* whom
your brothers will praise.
Your hand *will be* on the neck
of your enemies.
Your father's children will bow
down to you.
⁹ Judah *is* a lion's cub.

From the prey, my son,
you have gone up.
He stooped down,
he crouched like a lion,
and like an old lion.
Who will rouse him up?
¹⁰ The sceptre will not depart
from Judah, nor a lawgiver
from between his feet,
until Shiloh comes.
And the gathering
of the people *will be* to him.
¹¹ He ties his foal to the vine,
and his donkey's colt
to the choice vine.
He washes his garments
in wine,
and his clothes in
the blood of grapes.
¹² His eyes *will be* red with wine,
and his teeth white
with milk.
¹³ "Zebulun will live at the haven
of the sea.
And he *will be* a
haven for ships.
And his border will be
as far as Sidon.
¹⁴ "Issachar is a strong donkey
crouching down between
two burdens.
¹⁵ And he saw that restful place
was good,
and that the land *was* pleasant,
and bowed his shoulder

49:5 34:25-29.

49:7 Josh 19:1,9; 21:4. Simeon was later scattered partly in Judah's territory (Josh 19:2-9; with 15:26-32 and Neh 11:25-28), and partly among the tribes in the north of Israel (2 Chron 34:6). Levi had its towns throughout the other tribes of Israel and had no region of its own (Ex 32:26,29; Num 18:20,23; 35:2-8; Josh 21:1-42).

49:8 Judah probably means "praise".

"Bow down to you"— a prediction that Judah would later become the ruling tribe in Israel (1 Chron 5:2).

49:9 "Lion's cub"— compare Ezek 19:6; Micah 5:8; Num 24:9. The Lord Jesus, descended from Judah, is called "The Lion of the tribe of Judah" (Rev 5:5).

49:10 "Sceptre"— Ps 60:7; 108:8. Out of Judah came David and Solomon who reigned over the twelve tribes, and all the kings who ruled over the kingdom of Judah. In regard to His human nature Jesus Christ came from Judah (Luke 1:27; Heb 7:14).

"Shiloh"— this comes from a Hebrew word which may mean "He to whom it belongs", but it may possibly mean "quietness" or "rest". Almost this exact phrase is found in Ezek 21:26-27. The one to whom the ruler's sceptre belongs is the Lord Jesus. He is the King of the Jews (Matt 27:37), and the King of kings and Lord of lords (Rev 17:14; 19:11-16). He shall rule all nations in the future. The obedience of the people will be to Him (Ps 2:6-9; 72:1-11; Rev 2:26-27; 3:21).

49:11-12 These verses suggest prosperity in a settled environment. Verse 12 may also be translated "His eyes will be dull from wine, his teeth white from milk".

49:13 Zebulun later settled in the north of Israel not very far from the sea coast and from Sidon — close enough to be enriched by the abundance of the seas (Deut 33:18-19).

49:14-15 Jacob could predict no glorious future for this tribe. For the sake of life in a pleasant part of Canaan it would be willing to give up its freedom.

- to bear *loads*,
and became a servant to tribute.
- 16 “Dan will judge his people,
as one of the tribes of Israel.
- 17 Dan will be a serpent
by the road,
an adder in the path,
that bites the horses heels,
so that his rider falls
backwards.
- 18 “I wait for your salvation,
O LORD.
- 19 “Gad, a troop will overcome him,
but he will overcome at last.
- 20 “Asher, rich food *will come*
from him,
and he will yield royal dainties.
- 21 “Naphtali *is* a deer set free.
He gives beautiful words.
- 22 “Joseph *is* a fruitful bough,
a fruitful bough by a well,
whose branches run over the wall.
- 23 The archers bitterly attacked him,
and shot *at him*, and hated him.
- 24 But his bow remained firm,
and the arms of his hands
were made strong by the hands
of the mighty *God* of Jacob
(from there *is* the Shepherd,
the stone of Israel),
25 by the God of your father,
who will help you,
and by the Almighty,

- who will bless you *with*
blessings of heaven above,
blessings of the deep
that lies below,
blessings of the breasts,
and of the womb.
- 26 The blessings of your father have
surpassed the blessings of
my ancestors to the utmost
bounds of the everlasting hills.
They will be on the head
of Joseph,
and on the crown of
the head of him who was
separate from his brothers.
- 27 “Benjamin will be as
ravenous as a wolf.
In the morning he will
devour the prey,
and at night he will divide
the spoil”.

28 All these *are* the twelve tribes of Israel, and this is what their father spoke to them, while blessing them. He blessed each one according to his *appropriate* blessing. 29 And he gave them a command, saying to them, “I am going to be gathered to my people. Bury me with my fathers in the cave that is in the field of Ephron the Hittite, 30 in the cave in the field of Machpelah, which faces Mamre, in the land of Canaan, which Abraham bought with the field from Ephron

49:16-18 The name Dan means to judge or provide justice. However, this tribe failed miserably in this. At times it was more like a snake than a just judge. See Jud 18:1-31.

49:19 The tribe of Gad settled east of the Jordan River, away from the main land of Israel, and was exposed to the raids of enemy peoples on its borders (Num 32:1-5). Gad can also mean “attack” or “band of raiders”.

49:20 This tribe settled along the sea coast in Israel in a fertile part of the land.

49:21 The last phrase of this verse is obscure. It may also be translated “it bears beautiful fawns”. This tribe settled around the Sea of Galilee and in the hill country north of it. This verse suggests a life free and fair. The words “set free” suggest a time of bondage from which they recover. See Jud 4:1-7; 5:18.

49:22-26 Jacob’s favorite son comes in for the longest and greatest blessing. But Joseph was the most worthy of all the sons of Jacob, and God was directing Jacob’s thoughts and words. The tribes that came from Joseph’s two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, later received some of

the choicest parts of the land of Canaan as their portion. Ephraim was the leading tribe of Israel for at least three centuries and later was at the center of the northern kingdom of Israel. The prosperity of this tribe is referred to in Hos 12:8. Verse 23 refers to all Joseph’s sufferings at the hands of his brothers, and in Egypt.

49:24 “*God of Jacob*” – see note on Ps 146:5.

“*From there*” – from the hands of the God of Jacob or from the place of the God of Jacob.

“*Shepherd*” – John 10:11. “*Stone*” or “*Rock*”. See note at Deut 32:4.

49:25 “*Almighty*” – in Hebrew “*Shaddai*” – 17:1.

49:27 Benjamin was later a fierce and active tribe, as can be seen from Judges chapters 19–21; Ps 68:27. Ehud (Jud 3:12-30), and Saul, Israel’s first king who was something like a wolf, came from Benjamin. This is true also of Saul of Tarsus – another “wolf” before he became a “sheep” (Acts 9:1-2; Phil 3:5).

49:28 These blessings fitted the sons of Jacob in their character and history, and in God’s knowledge of the future.

49:29-32 23:3-20.

the Hittite as a possession for a burial site. ³¹There they buried Abraham and his wife Sarah. There they buried Isaac and his wife Rebekah. And there I buried Leah. ³²The purchase of the field and of the cave that is in it was from the children of Heth”.

³³And when Jacob had finished commanding his sons, he drew his feet up onto the bed, and expired, and was gathered to his people.

50 And Joseph fell on his father’s face, and wept on him, and kissed him. ²And Joseph commanded the physicians *who were* his servants to embalm his father. And the physicians embalmed Israel. ³And it took a full forty days for him, for it fully takes this many days for those who are being embalmed. And the Egyptians mourned for him seventy days.

⁴And when the days of his mourning were past, Joseph spoke to the household of Pharaoh, saying, “If now I have found favour in your eyes, please speak in the ears of Pharaoh and say, ⁵‘My father made me swear, saying, “Look, I am dying. You must bury me in my grave which I dug for myself in the land of Canaan”. Therefore, now please let me go up and bury my father, and I will come again.’ ”

⁶And Pharaoh said, “Go up and bury your father, just as he made you swear”.

⁷And Joseph went up to bury his father, and all the servants of Pharaoh, the elders of his household, and all the elders of the land of Egypt, ⁸and all the household of Joseph, and his brothers, and his father’s household, went up with him. They left behind in the land of Goshen only their little ones, and their flocks, and their herds. ⁹And both

chariots and horsemen went up with him, and it was a very great company.

¹⁰And they came to the threshing floor of Atad, which *is* beyond the Jordan, and there they mourned with a very great and bitter lamentation. And he observed seven days’ mourning for his father. ¹¹And when the inhabitants of the land, the Canaanites, saw the mourning on the floor of Atad, they said, “This *is* a bitter mourning to the Egyptians”. So its name was called Abel-Mizraim. It *is* beyond the Jordan.

¹²And his sons did for him just as he had commanded them. ¹³For his sons carried him into the land of Canaan, and buried him in the cave of the field of Machpelah, facing Mamre, which Abraham bought with the field as a possession for a burial site from Ephron the Hittite. ¹⁴And after burying his father, Joseph returned to Egypt, he and his brothers, and all who had gone up with him to bury his father.

¹⁵And when Joseph’s brothers saw that their father was dead, they said, “Maybe Joseph will hate us and pay us back for all the evil which we did to him”. ¹⁶And they sent *a messenger* to Joseph, saying, “Your father gave a command before he died, saying, ¹⁷‘Tell Joseph this: now please forgive the transgression of your brothers, and their sin, for they did evil to you.’ So now please forgive the transgression of the servants of the God of your father”. And Joseph wept when they spoke to him.

¹⁸And his brothers also went and prostrated themselves in his presence. And they said, “See, we *are* your servants”.

¹⁹And Joseph said to them, “Don’t be afraid, for *am* I in the place of God? ²⁰But as for you, you meant *it for* evil against me,

49:32 “*the children of Heth*”— Heth was the progenitor of the Hittite nation.

49:33 “*Gathered to his people*”— note at 25:8.

50:1 “*Wept*”— 45:14.

50:2 Jacob died (49:33), Israel was embalmed. After death he was no more Jacob but Israel forever.

50:3 The ancient Egyptians were very skilled in preparing bodies for burial. Some of these bodies are still in a state of preservation after 3,500 years.

50:5 47:29-31.

50:11 “*Abel-Mizraim*”— this name means “mourning of the Egyptians”.

50:13 23:16-20.

50:15-17 37:28; 42:21-22. In spite of all the kindness Joseph had shown them their conscience

was still uneasy and made them afraid. There is no record of Jacob giving the instructions they said he gave, but he may have done so.

50:17 “*Wept*”— 45:14. Joseph was grieved at their lack of trust in him. And does not our unbelief make the Lord Jesus sad?

50:18 “*Prostrated themselves in his presence*”— 37:8-10.

50:19 Joseph is saying that God alone is the judge of men, and the one who should take vengeance if necessary (Rom 12:17,19). See note at Num 31:2.

50:20 In this one verse Joseph shows his great trust in God, his clear grasp of spiritual truth, and his total acceptance of the will of God (compare 45:5-7; Deut 23:5; Ps 76:10; Rom 8:28). In the whole of human history God has been the great king over the world (see Ps 47:2 and note there).

but God meant it for good, so as to bring about *this result*, keeping many people alive, as *it is* today. ²¹Now, therefore, do not be afraid. I will provide for you and your little ones". And he comforted them and spoke kindly to them.

²²And Joseph lived in Egypt, he and his father's household. And Joseph lived a hundred and ten years. ²³And Joseph saw Ephraim's children of the third *generation*. Also the children of Machir, the son of Manasseh, were brought up on Joseph's

knees.

²⁴And Joseph said to his brothers, "I am dying, but God will surely come to you, and bring you out of this land to the land which he swore to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob". ²⁵And Joseph took an oath from the children of Israel, saying, "God will surely come to you, and you shall carry up my bones from here".

²⁶So Joseph died, aged a hundred and ten years. And they embalmed him, and he was put in a coffin in Egypt.

He has been working out His good purposes and bringing the greatest good to those who trusted and loved Him, even when men and devils (and sometimes they themselves) meant the greatest evil. There are many examples of this in the Bible.

Balak tried to destroy Israel and called Balaam to curse the nation, but God turned the event into blessing for Israel and the defeat of Balak (Numbers chapters 22–24).

Saul tried to murder David and chased him in the wilderness, but God was testing and preparing David for the throne of Israel and raised him to that position in the proper time. Satan tried to ruin Job, but the result was more blessing and prosperity, both spiritual and material for Job (Job 1:9-11; 2:7; 42:10).

Evil men tried to destroy Daniel, but through that attempt God brought more glory to Himself and a higher position for Daniel (Dan 6:1-28).

Often Paul was mistreated by evil men, beaten, stoned, imprisoned. Yet he said, and fully believed, that it was all for good (Rom 8:28; 2 Cor 4:17-18; 12:10; Phil 1:12-14).

The supreme example of this principle was the crucifixion of Jesus Christ the Son of God. Satan and wicked men meant it for evil. God meant it for good (Acts 2:23; 4:27-28), and through the acts of men at their worst He brought the greatest good to mankind, the eternal salvation of His people.

What a God! For His people He turns curses into blessings, evil into good, loss into gain, weakness into strength! God is the sovereign ruler of the universe. He is not a victim of circumstances and events. He controls circumstances and events, including the sinful acts of men, for His people's good, and to fulfill His purposes. Let us learn, as

Joseph did, to apply this great truth to our own lives. It can give us joy in troubles and peace in sorrows of every kind.

50:21 "*Kindly to them*"— some of the events in the life of Joseph are strikingly similar to some events in the life of Christ. They were both especially loved by their fathers (37:3; Matt 3:17; John 3:35; 5:20). Both were hated by their own people (37:4; John 15:24-25). The words of both were rejected by their people (37:8; John 8:37,43,45). There was a conspiracy to kill each of them (37:18; Matt 26:3-4). Each was sold into the hands of enemies (37:28; Matt 26:14-16). Each was falsely accused and punished (39:11-20; Matt 26:59-68; Luke 23:4,23,24). Each became a blessing to the Gentiles (41:48-49,54-57; Luke 24:45-47; Rom 1:16). Each rose to the highest place possible to him (41:38-44; Acts 2:36; Eph 1:20-22; Phil 2:9-11). Each was a means of saving his people (45:5-7; 47:11-12; Rom 1:16; 11:25-27). As Joseph made himself known at last to his brothers so will Jesus make himself known to the nation Israel (45:1-4; Zech 12:10; Rev 1:7). And as Joseph spoke kindly and showed kindness to his brothers as long as he lived, so will the Lord Jesus (Eph 2:7).

50:24-25 13:15; 26:3; 35:12.

50:26 "*A hundred and ten*"— see Heb 11:22. Throughout Genesis we see the life span of men getting less and less (5:27; 9:29; 11:10-32; 25:7; 37:28; 47:28). Later it was reduced further (Ps 90:10).

"*Coffin in Egypt*"— in the opening chapter of Genesis man is full of life, a living being made in God's image (1:27; 2:7). Genesis closes with death coming to one of the best of men. The reason for death is given in 2:17; 3:6; Rom 5:12.





The Creation

(Gen Ch. 1)

Genesis chapter one is a marvelous revelation from God, fully inspired and completely accurate, giving us certain facts about the origin of our world, of mankind and of all we see about us. We should all be very glad indeed to have this record of God's creative activity.

However, having the record and fully understanding it are two different matters. Actually, there are some major difficulties in our path when we try to understand all that God has revealed. Perhaps the principal difficulty is this: Some Hebrew words used there have more than one possible meaning and can be translated in various ways.

For example, the word translated "heaven" or "heavens" (NKJV) in verse 1 is the one word in Hebrew used to express everything from the air, the sky just above the earth, to the heavens of stars (and possibly galaxies - though galaxies are nowhere mentioned in the Bible). It is also the word used for Heaven, God's dwelling place. In verse 26 this same Hebrew word is translated "air" (and in about 20 other places in the Old Testament). In Hebrew the word is always in the plural. The singular is never used, even when the meaning is obviously singular, and so from the word itself we cannot always be sure whether singular or plural is meant. This is why some versions have "heaven" in verse 1, and others have "heavens".

Also the word translated "earth" is the same word for "land" and is used very often for the land of Israel.

And the Hebrew word usually translated "made" in verses 7 and 16 also has more than one meaning - "made ready", "prepared", "brought forth", "worked on", "did", as well as "made" or "created from existing material". The word translated "set" ("appointed" in some versions) in verse 17 is a form of the Hebrew word for "gave" which has quite a

variety of meanings.

The word "beginning" in verse 1 also gives scope for questions. Does it refer to the beginning of the whole universe? or only to the beginning of our galaxy, the Milky Way, with its stars that appear in our sky at night? or, for that matter, only to the earth and that part of the sky closest to earth? It is generally assumed that it refers to the beginning of the whole universe, and it may do so. But can this be proved beyond doubt from the Hebrew words used? Of course, God did create the whole universe (Eph 3:9; Col 1:16; Rev 4:11), but can we be absolutely certain that this is what He is saying here? Is it not possible that God is giving a revelation of what is of most concern to man on earth, that is, man's immediate environment, the earth and sky just above the earth, and that outer space was already in existence long before the event spoken of in Gen 1:1? (One recognized expert on the Hebrew language whom I contacted believes this is the way we should look at it.) Perhaps the galaxies in far distant space were created long before the Milky Way. Can it be proved that they were not? According to evidence put forth by astronomers the formation of new galaxies in space still goes on.

It certainly seems possible to me that the phrase "In the beginning" means the beginning of our corner of the universe, that part which relates most directly to mankind. The earth is very special to God. This is where He created man made in His image, and this is where He planned for His Son to come and live among men and die for them. So the "beginning" may well mean the beginning of this spot that is special in the eyes of God.

We may also have difficulties in understanding all that is in Genesis chapter 1 because of assumptions that have been

generally made about what is taught here. But assumptions are just that, and may not be the truth God has revealed.

There are also disputes among those who accept the Bible as the infallible Word of God (which it is) about the time periods involved in this chapter, and the manner in which God brought about all that is seen there.

This chapter, as the rest of the Bible, is God's Word, and we should all be very careful about making pronouncements concerning the events revealed in It, and AVOID DOGMATISM ABOUT DOUBTFUL THINGS (this should apply also about other revelations in the Bible which seem to us to have two or more possible interpretations). And we should not fail to love our brothers in the faith who disagree with our views on certain details of God's revelation.

As for the word translated "heaven", since the Hebrew word has various meanings, we should be careful not to immediately rule out any of them as we look at the opening verse of the Bible. Is God really speaking here of the whole universe? Or only of that part of it which is close to the earth? Should the word be translated "sky" or "skies? Are we to take the information given in verses 7 and 8 as the definition of the "heaven" in verse 1? The same Hebrew word is used in both verses. The language of verses 7 and 8, speaking of waters above the expanse (or firmament) and below the expanse, seems to indicate that the heaven spoken of in this chapter is related to the skies just above the earth, not to the far reaches of space.

Many scientists, at present, with the evidence they think they have gleaned, say that the universe is many billions of years old. This has not been proved to everyone's satisfaction, but assuming, for the moment, that it is true, it is not necessary to think that the earth is anywhere near that old. Its beginning might conceivably have been long after the creation of what we call outer space with its myriads of galaxies. If so, light from those far distant galaxies could have been streaming through this corner of space where the earth now is, before the earth was created. I am only suggesting possibilities, not making assertions.

There seems to be a good possibility that there was a gap between verses two and three of Genesis chapter 1, and perhaps a very long gap. It is not necessary to think

that verse 1, the creation of the heaven and the earth, is to be included in the work of the first day. Verse one was the original creation. Verse 3 begins the revelation of what God did to prepare the earth for life and human habitation. We are not told when God sent light to the dark and empty earth. Only the bare fact is stated. Some scholars believe that this time period could have been millions or even billions of years. If the "beginning" in 1:1 was the beginning of the whole universe. Including earth, then the earth is very old, and it could have remained dark and empty for an immense period of time before God sent light and began to change things.

Someone may ask, Why would God wait such a long period of time before going to work on the earth to make it fit for man's habitation? But we might just as well ask, why not? Why have a universe billions of years old (if that is what it is)? God does not regard time as we do (see Ps 90:4, where a thousand years to God is like a watch in the night - 4 hours). And He does not think as we do (Isa 55:8-9), and His judgments are unsearchable and His ways are past finding out (Rom 11:33). Of course, the appearance of man (*homo sapiens*) on earth was of recent origin, measured in thousands of years, not millions or billions.

We should look more carefully at 1:14-18. The Hebrew word translated "made" in verse 16 is "asah". This is not the same word used in verse 1, translated "created" ("bara"). Here "asah" may not mean "created", but "to work on" or "to produce", "to make ready", "to prepare" (see Ps 74:16)". The word "asah" is used over 2600 times in the Hebrew Old Testament ("bara" is used only 49 times), and has a wide band of meanings. In a few cases it is used with more or less the same meaning as "bara" (create), though it usually (perhaps always) seems to mean to make out of already existing material. In verse 26 God said "Let us make (asah) man in our image", and in the next verse we have the words, "So God created (bara) man in His own image". God "made" or created man out of previously existing material - the dust of the earth. In Gen 2:4 we have both verbs used again - "This is the history of the heaven and the earth when they were created ("bara"), in the day that the LORD God made ("asah") the earth and the heaven". So we cannot be absolutely sure

that Gen 1:14-16 indicates that God actually created the sun and moon at that time, using pre-existing material, or whether He merely worked on them and caused them at that time to shine on earth, perhaps by more fully removing a cloud and water canopy surrounding the earth.

Another possibility that perhaps should not be ruled out is this: Let us suppose that Gen 1:1 is speaking only of the earth and its local "heaven" (that which surrounded the earth close in), and that the earth was actually created before the sun, the moon and the stars which appear to us on earth. Could not earth have been a special creation held in the hand of God on which He lovingly began His special work, giving it light from some source other than the sun (v 3), and afterwards actually creating the sun, moon and stars we read about in verses 14-16. But, someone will object, the earth needed to turn on its axis and needed to revolve around a heavenly body as it now does the sun. This is true if the only forces that exist are the physical forces of nature. But God the Creator is not limited to physical forces, and in creation may do as He pleases.

And there is another force operating in the universe, one which scientists cannot examine. See Heb 1:3 and Col 1:17, where we are told that all things are "upheld" by the powerful word of the Lord Jesus Christ, and that by Him all things "hold together".

If, in fact, the sun and moon and visible stars came into existence after the earth was already here, then "asah" could mean that they were created out of already existing material (such as clouds of gas). If this is the way things came about, then the age of our solar system, and indeed our whole galaxy (but not the whole universe, and not necessarily the earth), would be measured in thousands of years, not billions. Light from the center of this galaxy, traveling at the rate of 186,000 miles per second, could reach the earth in about 28,000 years. But perhaps the words "the stars" means only the stars that appear in our night sky. In this case, the sun, moon, and these close stars could be younger than that.

If, on the other hand, it can be proved that this galaxy is many millions or billions of years old (and some scientists think they have proved this), that should not trouble us. It should not affect the conviction that

the present earth, prepared for mankind's habitation, is much, much younger than that, however old the original earth and this galaxy might be.

We should look at the sentence 'He made the stars also'. Perhaps this means that He made them appear from the earth's point of view - that is, made conditions ready so that their light would reach earth. However, it would not be contrary to the Hebrew here to translate this "He had made the stars also" - referring to a work done long before. Notice that the words "He made" or "He had made" are in Italics, indicating that they are not in the original Hebrew. Or the expression might be a simple statement which means this: He who did all these other things is the One who also made the stars. Or it could even mean that at that time He actually took preexisting material and made the stars which now appear to us on earth.

One last theory should be put in the list of possibilities - some Christian scholars insist that the entire universe, all the heavens with their myriads of galaxies, together with the original earth, was made only some thousands of years ago, and that six literal days of creation followed immediately after that. To me there seems to be scientific evidence against this view that makes it very doubtful indeed. If in the future this scientific evidence proves to be invalid, then this interpretation could seem much more likely than it does at present. But it is not necessary to accept this interpretation as the best explanation of the language of Genesis chapter 1, as I have tried to show in these notes. And since the language of the Bible itself does not demand such an interpretation, what is the value of trying to establish it?

To the author of these notes, in his present state of knowledge, these seem to be the possibilities. When I say "possibilities" I mean things that seem possible from the use of Hebrew words and phrases, and not necessarily scientifically possible, or possible from God's point of view. Actually, from God's point of view there is only one "possibility" - that which He actually did back there "in the beginning" and during the time following that.

In any case, trying to determine the age of the universe or of the present earth (or the earth as it was originally) is not my chief

concern. Of what spiritual benefit would the knowledge of that be to anyone? We should be much more concerned with the God who created and made them and us, and with His later revelation of Himself, and with what He has done for us and what He wants us to be and do.

In the above notes I have set forth these theories, suggestions and possibilities which give some idea of the diversity of opinions held by believers about God's activities in regard to the heavens and the earth. What do I myself believe? I believe, as I said above, that we should be very cautious in our interpretation of the details of God's revelation here, and not express our opinions as if they were the absolute truth of God.

Further, I believe that what we call outer space with its myriads of galaxies, etc is probably some billions of years old; that the condition of the earth from Gen 1:3 onward is quite young in comparison, its age to be measured in thousands, not billions, of years; that it is possible that the earth before God prepared it for man's habitation is older than that, and perhaps much older than that. If the beginning stated in 1:1 was the beginning only of our Milky Way galaxy then that might have taken place long after the creation of outer space with its galaxies. In this case, our galaxy and our earth need not be very ancient compared to the rest of the universe. We would have not merely a young earth, but a comparatively young galaxy as well. If, on the other hand, 1:1 refers to the beginning

of the whole universe and the earth along with it then the original earth could be very ancient indeed. If this is the way we should understand that verse, then we might well consider that there was a huge gap in time between verses 2 and 3, God waiting a very long time before He sent light onto the earth and went to work on it again. In this case, the physical earth, desolate and void, was very old, but the earth made ready for life and man is a great deal younger. And since this prepared earth is comparatively young, then the days mentioned in this chapter could well be days of 24 hours. If Gen 1:1 is speaking only of the earth and its local "heaven", the "air", then the earth and the sun, moon, and stars spoken of in verses 14-16 could be young, and the days of this chapter would be days of 24 hours.

Faced with all these possibilities, I would state again my conviction that it is not wise to be unduly dogmatic. God knows what He did and when He did it, and He knows also that His revelation of what He did, when properly understood, will be in complete harmony with any real truth science can ever discover. Let us indeed be dogmatic in teaching that God is the great Creator, and earth is a special creation made for a special purpose and that man too is a special creation of God. But the various interpretations of some of the details of His creation, at present, surely should not be put forward with the same certainty as these great truths.

